

Aspects of Peace of Mind & Body



Achieve **N**oble **C**haracter

Aspects of Peace of Mind & Body

ShaykhPod Books

Published by ShaykhPod Books, 2024

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Aspects of Peace of Mind & Body

Third edition. October 27, 2024.

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Acknowledgements

All praises are for Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds, who has given us the inspiration, opportunity and strength to complete this volume. Blessings and peace be upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad whose path has been chosen by Allah, the Exalted, for the salvation of mankind.

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to the entire ShaykhPod family, especially our little star, Yusuf, whose continued support and advice has inspired the development of ShaykhPod Books. And a special thanks to our brother, Hasan, whose dedicated support has elevated ShaykhPod to new and exciting heights which seemed impossible at one stage.

We pray that Allah, the Exalted, completes His favour on us and accepts each letter of this book in His august court and allows it to testify on our behalf on the Last Day.

All praise to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds and endless blessings and peace by upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on his blessed Household and Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

The following book discusses some Aspects of Peace of Mind and Body such as: Peace of Mind, Contentment, Patience, Gratitude, Financial Dealings, Justice, Independence, Socializing, Hope, Provision and many more.

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid one to adopt positive characteristics which in turn leads to Peace of Mind and Body.

Aspects of Peace of Mind & Body

Intention & Sincerity - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards: Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to the leaders of society and to the general public.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

An aspect of being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, is to trust that His decrees and choices are best for the people involved, even if the wisdoms behind His decrees are not obvious to people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

To only be pleased with the decrees that suit one's desires and become upset at the decrees which contradict one's desires is clear insincerity to Allah, the Exalted. The one who maintains sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through every situation and state is truly the sincere one.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342. An aspect of being sincere to the Holy Quran is to approach it with the sincere intention of understanding and acting on all of it, irrespective if one's desires are contradicted by the Holy Quran. The one who cheery picks which commands, prohibitions and advice to follow and ignore based on their whims has adopted insincerity towards it and they will not therefore, truly benefit from it's guidance. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. Behaving in this manner is showing insincerity towards it.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

It includes to accept his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words. It is an aspect of being sincere to him to respect, love and practically follow him. But this is not possible to do without learning about his blessed life and teachings. How can one respect, love and follow someone they do not even know? The one who claims to love and respect him but fails to practically follow him is insincere in their claim.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being sincere to the leaders of the community and includes showing sincerity to the religious leaders and teachers. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society. There is no blind loyalty to leaders in Islam, only obedience to them in things which please Allah, the Exalted.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”

An aspect of being sincere to others is aiding them in order to please Allah, the Exalted. One should not desire gratitude from people, as this destroys one's reward and is clear insincerity to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Intention & Sincerity - 2

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds, and even Islam itself, is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter, as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their

children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others, such as their children, and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 110:

"...So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone."

Intention & Sincerity - 3

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who contradicts their own advice when commanding good and forbidding evil will be punished in Hell.

Instead of following in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by advising only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, many people advise for other reasons, such as to gain popularity. For example, some scholars often strive to be in the spotlight of gatherings and events and are not pleased with a seat which is to one side, as they desire a central seat. When their intention became like this, Allah, the Exalted, removed the positive effect of their advice and thus they now have little positive influence over their listeners. They should have shown a practical example instead of saying one thing and doing another. This caused their advice to become ineffective. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 44:

"Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?"

Muslims should strive to always act on their own advice before commanding others to do so, as behaving in this manner is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

“Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.”

This does not mean one must become perfect before advising others, as this is not possible. Instead, they should correct their intention and prove this through their actions by striving to act on their own advice before advising others. Only with this attitude will they avoid the punishment mentioned in this Hadith. The failure in acting on this principle has caused the advice of muslims to become ineffective, even though the number of advisers has dramatically increased over the years.

Intention & Sincerity - 4

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever does a good deed will have a minimum of ten times reward.

Throughout Islamic teachings different amounts of reward have been declared for performing righteous deeds. Some teachings advise ten times reward like this Hadith, others seven hundred times and in some cases a reward which cannot be counted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills...”

This varying reward is dependent on one's sincerity. The more sincere a person is, the more they will be rewarded. Meaning, the more they perform the righteous deed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be rewarded. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing.

Intention & Sincerity - 5

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that even slightly showing off is polytheism.

This is a minor type of polytheism which does not cause one to lose their faith. Instead it leads to the loss of reward, as this muslim acted for the sake of pleasing people when they should have acted to please Allah, the Exalted. In fact, these people will be told on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

If the Devil cannot prevent one from performing righteous deeds, he will attempt to corrupt their intention thereby destroying their reward. If he cannot corrupt their intention in an obvious way he tries to corrupt it through subtle ways. This includes when people subtly show off their righteous deeds to others. Sometimes it is so subtle that the person themselves are not fully aware of what they are doing. As gaining and acting on knowledge is a duty on all, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, claiming ignorance will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

Subtly showing off often occurs through social media and one's speech. For example, a muslim might inform others they are fasting even though no one directly asked them if they were fasting. Another example is

when one publicly recites the Holy Quran from memory in front of others thereby showing others they have memorized the Holy Quran. Even criticizing oneself publicly can be considered showing off one's humility to others.

To conclude, showing off subtly destroys a muslim's reward and must be avoided in order to safeguard their righteous deeds. This is only possible by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, such as how to safeguard one's speech and actions.

Intention & Sincerity - 6

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to recognize why they worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted, according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become

like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This Muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

To conclude, it is important for Muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

Intention & Sincerity - 7

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over one of the main reasons why people who do good things, such as buying gifts for others, do not receive the same level of respect and love from people than some who do not do these things. This outcome occurs as a result of their intention. When these people perform righteous deeds in respect to people, such as visiting the sick, they do so either for the sake of people meaning, to please them or they mix this intention by also aiming to please Allah, the Exalted. First of all, the one who acts for the sake of people will gain no reward from Allah, the Exalted. They will be told to gain their reward from the people they acted for on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Scholars are divided on whether those who mix their intention by aiming to please Allah, the Exalted, and people will receive a partial reward or none at all. In order to be on the safe side a wise Muslim should only act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

On the other hand, the other people who gain more respect and love from others do so because they solely act for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. When they treat others kindly they do not do it for the sake of people. Because of their sincerity Allah, the Exalted, places more love and respect in the hearts of the people compared to those who do more acts of kindness to people but are less sincere in their deeds.

So if people desire reward from Allah, the Exalted, and respect from people they should correct their intention and only perform righteous deeds for the

sake of Allah, the Exalted. One sign of this correct intention is that this person will aim to please Allah, the Exalted, even if it displeases people. Meaning, they do not pay attention to the attitude and reactions of people.

Intention & Sincerity - 8

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how a celebrity was standing up for women's rights. Undoubtedly, it is a good cause, as honouring women has been taught by Islam even though some muslims fail to act on these teachings. The thing that came to mind is that many people have come and gone who have stood up for some sort of cause, whether it was to do with women's rights, human rights, the poor, or something else, yet only a small per cent of these people had a positive impact on society. The majority had no positive effect and instead became footnotes in history. One of the reasons for this is a lack of sincerity. If one turns the pages of history they will observe that those who acted with the correct intention meaning, to truly benefit society without any ulterior motives, were granted success, even if they were not muslims. Benefit to others is something Allah, the Exalted, loves and He therefore grants success to all those who sincerely strive for this end.

Those who did not achieve a positive effect on society lacked this good intention as they desired something else, such as fame. In most cases, their bad intention is quite evident, as their words and actions clearly contradict each other. For example, some claim to stand up for the rights of women, then happily take part in advertising campaigns which show women to be nothing except ornaments to be gawked at. If their actions supported their claims they would have instead taught the advertising companies that a woman's intelligence, good character and inner strength are what should be displayed to the world through their advertising campaigns.

Many of these people who claim to stand up for different causes are in a position of political and social influence and they possess much wealth yet, their positive influence on society is minimal and very short lived. On the other hand, those who may not have possessed such influence, changed the attitude of millions through their sincerity. They only desired to benefit society; they did not seek anything else. Because of their sincerity their positive influence and remembrance endured long after they departed this world whereas, those whose intention was corrupt, were quickly forgotten even while they were still alive.

So if one desires to succeed in the material world or more importantly in matters of faith, they should strive to correct their intention. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, judges people based on their intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Intention & Sincerity - 9

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the different life aims and goals of people and how they worked in order to achieve them.

It is important for muslims to understand a key concept in Islam. Namely, there is nothing wrong with desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, but it is best to avoid worshipping and obeying Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain them. This is because these types of muslims often only worship Allah, the Exalted, and inhabit the Mosques when they desire worldly things. But if they do not receive them they become impatient and fed up which causes them to stop obeying Allah, the Exalted. Or if they obtain them, then the joy of them often makes them turn away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they achieved what they desired and therefore do not need to obey Allah, the Exalted, anymore. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 83:

“When We grant people Our favours, they turn away, acting arrogantly. But when touched with evil, they lose all hope.”

These muslims worship Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they obey Allah, the Exalted, only when it suits their desires. And because of this attitude they are in danger of becoming misguided. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

These muslims may claim that they are worshipping Allah, the Exalted, but in reality, they are only worshipping their own desires and the gifts and blessings they receive.

It is praiseworthy to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain religious blessings, such as Paradise, as this has been recommended by Islamic teachings. But it is far superior to worship Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One worthy of it and because the creation are His servants.

If a muslim must desire gifts and blessings, then it is best to aim for religious blessings, as aiming for worldly blessings can shift a person's intention so that they end up worshipping the gift instead of the Giver.

Intention & Sincerity - 10

I watched a news report a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a high ranking government official of Saudi Arabia discussing a potential plan the Saudi government was considering. It was considering completely opening the Visa applications so that people can perform the visitation to the holy city of Mecca, known as Umra, all year round. Currently, the Visas available are restricted to certain times in the year.

Even though, this is a good plan and should be carried out, what was surprising was their intention for considering this plan. As the oil prices have been dropping over the years and the fact that the oil will eventually run out, the Saudi government is taking steps by investing in other business opportunities all over the world in order to ensure they stay rich. Even though, this is not prohibited in Islam but the thing which is surprising is that their only reason for potentially allowing pilgrims to journey to Mecca all year round, was to gain more wealth. This intention, the news report made very clear. It was very surprising as muslims should know the very famous Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. It advises that the actions of a person are judged based on their intention. If their intention behind their decision is only to gain more wealth then they will get no reward from Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they will gain is more wealth, which will eventually slip out of their hands. But if they intended to allow pilgrims to journey to Mecca all year round for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, more people would worship Allah, the Exalted, and gain countless good deeds, then they would have gained reward for their plan in both this world and in the next, as well as gained the wealth they wanted.

In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4899, advises that whoever invites someone to something good gets the same reward as the one who performed the righteous action they were invited towards. This means, if the Saudi government intended to please Allah, the Exalted, with their plan they would have got the same reward gained by every single person who performed the visitation meaning, Umra, simply because they invited them to perform this deed by extending the Visas to all year round. Can one imagine how much reward they would get while sitting in their homes?

The lesson to learn from this is simple. When one acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, by adhering to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will gain blessings in both worlds. But if they act for the sake of the world, they might gain something from the world but they will receive nothing in the hereafter. So it is important to think before acting as one can potentially lose an uncountable reward just because of their bad intention.

Intention & Sincerity - 11

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics which perfect a muslim's faith.

The first is to love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others financially, emotionally and physically within one's means. Counting one's favors to others not only cancels the reward but also proves their lack of love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as this person only loves gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”

Any type of negative feelings towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided.

This noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions not just words. This is an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

Finally, loving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, includes loving the things Allah, the Exalted, loves, such as the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This love must be practically shown by learning and acting on these two sources of guidance and attaching oneself to the other things beloved to Allah, the Exalted, such as righteous deeds and the Mosques.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to hate for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others, as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them, as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one's own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin, as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is giving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This refers to every blessing one can give to others, such as physical and emotional support, not just wealth. When one gives, they will do so according to the teachings of Islam meaning, in matters pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as giving sincere advice. In fact, this is an aspect of being sincere to others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes giving and sharing these blessings with others without counting one's favors, as this proves they gave in order to receive something from others. Chapter 76 Al Insan, verse 9:

“[Saying], “We feed you only for the face [i.e., approval] of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude.””

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is withholding for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes withholding the blessings one possesses, such as wealth, from others in matters which are displeasing to Allah, the Exalted. This muslim will not observe who is requesting something from them instead they only assess the reason behind the request. If the reason contradicts the teachings of Islam they will withhold the blessing and not take part in the activity. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

This includes withholding one's speech and actions in matters which are not pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as backbiting or manifesting one's anger. This muslim will not speak and act according to their desires and only precede in a situation when it pleases Allah, the Exalted, otherwise, they will withhold and refrain from preceding forward.

To conclude, adopting these characteristics leads to perfection of faith, as they are based on one's emotions and are therefore extremely difficult to control. This control is best achieved when one obtains certainty of faith. This is achieved when one learns and acts on Islamic knowledge. Certainty of faith helps to direct one's intention, focus and actions to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This will aid one in controlling the four aspects mentioned in the main Hadith. In addition, whoever is blessed with controlling them will find fulfilling the other duties of Islam easier. These duties consist of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is the key to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Intention & Sincerity - 12

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Muslims are often rightly advised the importance of gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. And how knowledge which is not acted on has little to no benefit in either this world or the next. A further important point needs to be understood on this topic. If one desires to be rightly guided, so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, they must adopt a sincere attitude. Meaning, the only one who will be rightly guided by Islamic teachings is the one who comes to this knowledge with the intention to completely accept and act on it according to their best effort, without cherry picking what teachings to accept and act and what teachings to ignore, according to their desires. One must submit, accept and act on all the teachings, irrespective of how much it contradicts their desires, to the best of their ability. The truth is that there will always be teachings from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that will weigh heavily on a person, as it contradicts their desires and attitude. This is because everyone has an inner devil which dislikes being contradicted. Only when one sincerely tries to submit to these teachings, the teachings which contradict their desires, will they obtain right guidance. Cherry picking what to follow or ignore is what caused the misguidance of the past nations and it will prevent a Muslim from obtaining peace and success in both worlds. Just like people take bitter medicine, despite disliking it, knowing it is good for them, one must accept and act on all the teachings of Islam despite their desires being contradicted, knowing it is best for them. Allah, the Exalted, does not expect nor demand perfection but peace and success cannot be obtained until one approaches the teachings of Islam with sincerity and the intention to accept and act on all of it according to their ability, irrespective of how difficult that may be to do. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

"And We send down of the Qur'ān that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss."

Intention & Sincerity - 13

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Even though performing spiritual exercises based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are praiseworthy, it is important for a Muslim to avoid engrossing themselves in spiritual exercises which are not advised in the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoid those done in order to obtain worldly things. This was not the behaviour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Behaving in this manner encourages one to treat the treasury of Allah, the Exalted, like a shop where one buys worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, in exchange for some spiritual exercises. This is a highly disrespectful and insincere attitude to adopt, as the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are not credit cards which can be used to purchase worldly things, such as a child or a visa. One must instead know their place and behave as a sincere slave of Allah, the Exalted, and not act as a customer in His divine court. They should sincerely obey Him by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him.

One is allowed to ask for lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, in a way endorsed by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but must avoid other ways, as it leads to misusing the two sources of guidance and adopting a customer type attitude towards Allah, the Exalted. The aim of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are to guide mankind on how to live and use their worldly blessings correctly so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds.

When one ignores this purpose and instead uses them as a credit card to purchase worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, it will only take them further from peace and right guidance and into the hands of con artists who claim they can help others gain worldly things through spiritual exercises. Ignoring this primary function is as aimless as someone who buys a car with many features, such as air conditioning, yet the car cannot be driven as it is missing an engine.

Intention & Sincerity - 14

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Most Muslims understand the importance of having a good intention, as it is the foundation of Islam. Allah, the Exalted, judges the actions of people based on their intention. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. But one important aspect is often overlooked by Muslims. The fact that having a good intention, especially towards others, is not good enough, as a good intention must also be supported by good actions, otherwise one's good intention becomes fruitless. For example, one cannot steal from the rich in order to give to the poor. Even if their intention is to help the needy for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their action will not be accepted, as the action is unlawful in Islam.

Unfortunately, when dealing with other people, Muslims often overlook this fact. They often advise others towards certain lawful actions without thinking about the consequences of them nor understanding the reality that the actions are not in the best interest of the person they are advising. Instead of taking these important things into consideration before advising towards certain actions, these people often rely on their good intention towards others and press ahead without deliberation. For example, a parent may encourage their child to marry their relative or a family friend, simply because of the relationship between the two families, instead of taking other important aspects into consideration, such as whether that person will make a suitable spouse for their child. The parent simply relies on their good intention towards their child, which in reality, prevents them from acting with sincerity towards their child, according to the teachings of Islam. No one doubts that the parent wants their child to have a successful and happy marriage but this good intention is not enough according to the

teachings of Islam. The parent must take into consideration other factors, such as suitability for their child, before moving forward with their intention.

Another example, is when one tries to learn and act on Islamic knowledge and are heavily criticized by their relatives. Each relative has a good intention towards them yet this deludes and prevents them from observing that what the person is doing is good and beneficial. By solely relying on their good intention towards their relative and failing to assess the situation correctly, they end up hindering them from good.

A good intention is simply not good enough, one must support their good intention with good and thought-out actions. This is one of the reasons why people have said that the path to Hell is paved with good intentions, as people make errors in judgement in respect to themselves and others and solely rely on a good intention for a successful outcome. The root of this behaviour is ignorance. One must avoid this attitude by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they adopt and implement a good intention which is supported by good, sincere and well thought-out actions.

Intention & Sincerity - 15

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. The truth is that each worshipper of false deities only worships their own desires. Their deities are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships a deity in the form of an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. Therefore, their worship of their desires is the root of their worship. The influential and rich are more drowned in this mentality as they are aware that accepting the truth meaning, Islam, will force them to live according to a specific code of conduct which will prevent them from acting on their misguided desires. They advise others to follow them as they do not wish to lose their influence and authority. This is why history as shown they were the first to reject and oppose the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This attitude has nothing to do with Islam being the right or wrong religion based on clear evidence, it is simply about fulfilling one's desires.

Peace of Mind & Body - 1

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Throughout the divine scriptures there are many examples which indicate that a person shall be treated according to how they act. For example, in one verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will remember the person who remembers Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152.

“So remember Me; I will remember you.”

Another example is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

“...fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me]...”

Finally, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever shows mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is quite obvious that people strive in this material world as they desire peace of mind and contentment. In light of the earlier discussion, peace in one's life is often achieved when a person allows others to live in peace. If one reflects on their own life they will realise that people can be split into two categories: those who mind their business and allow others to live in peace and those who do not. It does not take a genius to figure out that those who let others live in peace are the ones who gain peace. Whereas, members of the other group never find peace irrespective of how many worldly blessings they may possess. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3976, that a Muslim cannot perfect their Islam until they avoid things which do not concern them. Those who ignore this advice and busy themselves with interfering with other people are the ones who never find peace. As they deprive others of peace in turn Allah, the Exalted, deprives them of it.

Therefore, a large step towards achieving peace of mind is to let others live in peace. It is important to note, this does not mean one should abandon commanding good and forbidding evil as this is an important duty. But it means that those things which are not sinful should be left alone as constantly chiding others on issues which are not unlawful only leads to enmity and the loss of peace in peoples' lives. There was a day and age when people loved being advised by others on all lawful and unlawful matters even if this meant they were being chided as they desired to reform themselves for the better. But that day has long passed. Nowadays, most people dislike being chided over the unlawful let alone those things which are lawful yet undesirable. So it is best to avoid this attitude if one desires to gain a bit of peace in their life.

To conclude, the one who lets others live in peace shall be granted peace by Allah, the Exalted.

Peace of Mind & Body - 2

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises preparing for the hereafter over striving for this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world, will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person, even if they possess little wealth, as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter, the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this, but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

Prioritising preparing for the hereafter means that one should always act and speak in a way which will benefit them in the hereafter. As explained earlier, this includes striving for one's lawful provision in order to fulfill their necessities and responsibilities without being wasteful or extravagant. Any activity which will not benefit one in the hereafter should be minimized. The more one behaves in this manner the more contentment they will be blessed with and the easier their day to day activities will become. In addition, they will adequately prepare for the hereafter also, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they achieve peace and success in both worlds.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises striving after the material world over preparing for the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world, will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied. This, by definition, makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful, which only leads to a greater loss in both worlds. Finally, because of their attitude, they will not prepare adequately for the hereafter. Therefore, this person obtains stress and discontentment in both worlds.

Peace of Mind & Body - 3

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Many people set the standards for their happiness according to the rules and desires of other people. The problem with this mentality is that one will become sad or happy depending on the desires of people. If they persist on this attitude than they reach a level where they love, hate, give, withhold and act according to the desires of people. This attitude will only lead to overall sadness in one's life as truly pleasing others is unattainable. People are not pleased with Allah, the Exalted, when He granted them countless blessings how can they possibly be pleased with people who innately gave them nothing? So living with the attitude of always aiming to please others will only result in sadness.

A Muslim should therefore strive to obtain the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, which is easily obtainable. This person will love, hate, give and withhold for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This is only achieved through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This will lead to true happiness in both worlds and therefore it is the key to happiness.

Peace of Mind & Body - 4

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims in all aspects of their life to always set realistic expectations as setting unrealistic expectations always leads to disappointment, sadness, grief and depression which are the ingredients for impatience and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This only leads to further trouble in both worlds. For example, Muslims should reject the fantasy created by Bollywood by believing their marriage will be like a fairy-tale. This is a ridiculous and unrealistic expectation which will only lead to disappointment. Whereas, if one understands that marriage has difficulties but is willing to work through them then they are more likely to achieve happiness and peace of mind.

In addition, a Muslim should set realistic expectations according to their own situation and life meaning, they should not observe others and set their expectations according to their standards. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In reality, a true Muslim will not set expectations in respect to people as they would only rely and trust in Allah, the Exalted. But this is a high and rare status to achieve. Therefore, if a Muslim must set expectations in respect to people they should make them realistic otherwise they will only lead to disappointment, grief and depression.

Peace of Mind & Body - 5

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. The news article reported on a female senior member of the American government who was fired because she refused to implement an order which was clearly unethical and immoral. It is quite clear that senior posts in governments and large corporations are dominated by men. So one can imagine how hard she must have worked and how many sacrifices she must have made in order to reach her rank in the American government. She knew if she refused to follow her superior's orders she would have lost her job, yet she still did not compromise on her values. Islam teaches muslims that they too should adopt this mentality and never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”

As the material world is temporary, whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. In addition, as they forgot to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, the very worldly things they gained through compromising on their faith will become a source of their misery, even if they have some moments of enjoyment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little—they will weep much as a reward for what they have committed."

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing which leads to misery in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Many people, especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith or not. For example, in some cases, a muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way, she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a muslim might find themselves being invited to a pub or club after work. In times like these, it is important to remember that peace of mind and success in both worlds will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to grant them peace, increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of worldly success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune, only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

Peace of Mind & Body - 6

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a common problem most people encounter during their lives. People often complain that no matter how hard they try they cannot seem to please everyone. No matter what situation they are in someone always seems to be displeased with them. This is a reality which all experience whether it is in their family life, work life or with friends. A Muslim should always remember a few simple things which would prevent them from stressing over this issue.

Firstly, the majority of people are not pleased with Allah, the Exalted, even though He granted them countless blessings without being asked to. How then can these people be truly happy with another person who in reality gave them nothing? Their lack of pleasure with Allah, the Exalted, is quite evident from their complaining and the lack of gratitude they show Him.

Secondly, no matter how much a person improves their character they will never reach the sublime character possessed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, yet they were still disliked by some people. If this is the case with them how can a normal person achieve the pleasure of everybody during their life?

A Muslim should also remember that as people were created with different mind-sets they will always find people who disagree with their attitude and behaviour. Because of this there will always be some people who are not pleased with a person at any given point in time. The only one who can come close to pleasing everyone is the two-faced person who changes their attitude and beliefs depending on who they are dealing with. But eventually even this person will be publicly disgraced by Allah, the Exalted.

Therefore, obtaining the pleasure of all people is unattainable and only a foolish person will strive to achieve something which cannot be obtained. A Muslim should therefore strive to prioritise the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, above all else by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean a Muslim should not be respectful to others as this contradicts the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It means a Muslim should understand that if they obey Allah, the Exalted, He will protect them from the negative attitude and effects of people even if this protection is not obvious to them. But if they prioritise pleasing people they will not achieve it and Allah, the Exalted, will not protect them from the displeasure and negative effects of people.

Peace of Mind & Body - 7

I had a thought which I wanted to share. As all people have not been created the same they are bound to disagree on certain things. In matters related to religion and those which differentiate between lawful and unlawful things a Muslim must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who challenges or disagrees with them. But in matters where the choice is between lawful worldly options a Muslim is entitled to offer their opinion to others when they are requested to. But they should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time they can cause enmity to build up between people which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even result in the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for Muslims to let things go and not harbour a negative feeling towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themselves to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themselves always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to a difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding and acting on this advice is a branch of finding peace in this world.

Peace of Mind & Body - 8

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to fulfil the rights people have over them, such as their parents, according to the teachings of Islam. But they should not do this for the sake of people nor should they go overboard in their duties by crossing the limits set by Allah, the Exalted. One should instead act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and stay within the limits set by Him when fulfilling their duties to others. For example, they should not disobey Allah, the Exalted, in the process of pleasing people. The problem with dedicating one's life and efforts to people, even if no sins are committed, is that a day will certainly come when this person will realise that they dedicated so much effort to people but in return obtained nothing significant from them, such as gratitude. This attitude leads to bitterness towards life and people. If one persists on this attitude they will eventually fail in their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and especially those duties towards people. On the other hand when one acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how little gratitude people show them they will not become bitter as they acted for and hope reward from Allah, the Exalted. If one's intention is sincere this will prevent bitterness as they seek payback for their efforts from Allah, the Exalted, not people. People might let them down through a lack of gratitude whereas Allah, the Exalted, will reward them beyond their expectations.

Peace of Mind & Body - 9

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on social freedom and the rights of people especially, women. First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then they would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse, as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do, even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse type of servants, as they serve only their own desires, just like animals and the evil people in society, such as paedophiles and rapists. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others, especially their own desires, were eventually disgraced in this world and were plagued with mental disorders and substance addiction, even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives, these

people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal, as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants, they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Peace of Mind & Body - 10

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free rein to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As

a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

Peace of Mind & Body - 11

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the stricter measures the government was taking in order to combat the spread of the Corona Virus.

As people have been placed in a lockdown type scenario, it should remind muslims of being placed on permanent lockdown meaning, death. The same way people are rushing in order to stock pile their daily necessities, such as food, a muslim should hasten towards stock piling the necessities required in order to succeed in both worlds namely, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn ensures one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Muslims should take the opportunity of being on lockdown by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge in order to prepare for their permanent lockdown which will occur soon, at an unknown time.

In addition, muslims should make use of the time they have at home by truly reflecting on their life, actions and the path they are on. It is vital to understand that the one who assesses and judges their deeds during their life, sincerely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be inspired to improve their character towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. This will ensure they behave correctly in this world, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, thereby obtaining peace of mind, and this self-reflection will ensure they

have an easy judgment on the Day of Resurrection. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But those who fail to make use of their time by judging themselves will continue in heedlessness and therefore experience a difficult life in this world, as they misused the blessings they were granted, and they will experience a strict and difficult judgment on the Day of Resurrection. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Finally, this reflection is unlikely to occur when one worships excessively especially, in a language they do not understand. This reflection only occurs when one studies and acts on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. There is plenty of knowledge available at the click of a button, so muslims are left with the no excuses.

Peace of Mind & Body - 12

I read a news article, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the stresses of modern day work and finding peace in one's life. It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries, such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world, it will only lead them further away from their goal, as it will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind, as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind, even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world, as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives, as this is guaranteed. But through their obedience, Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure, as they have been anaesthetised. This is similar to how the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was granted safety and peace even within a great fire. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 68-69:

"They said, "Burn him and support your gods - if you are to act." We [Allāh] said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.""

Peace of Mind & Body - 13

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the emotional state of people who try to balance different aspects of their life, such as their work, personal and social life. One thing which can help a person to avoid stress associated with this is by adopting a balanced state of mind. This is when one tries to control their emotions in such a way that they do not allow themselves to experience extreme emotional states, as these often lead to stress and mental disorders. This has been indicated in chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23 of the Holy Quran:

“In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”

Islam does not prohibit one from showing emotions, as this is a part of being human. But it advises a balanced state of mind whereby one does not swing from one extreme emotion to another. Being sad in difficult situations is acceptable but one should not despair, which is extreme sadness, as this often leads to other mental disorders, such as depression. And being happy is acceptable but one should not become overly happy namely, exultant, as this can often lead to sins and regrets in both worlds. A muslim should strive to obtain a balanced state of mind by remembering the countless blessings they still possess in times of difficulty which prevents extreme sadness namely, despair. And in times of ease they should remember that they will be held accountable for the thing that pleases them and if they misuse it or fail to fulfil the duties linked to it, they may face punishment over it. In addition, if they use the

blessing in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they will gain more blessings in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

Behaving in this manner will prevent one from becoming overly happy namely, exultant.

A balanced state of mind is always best which prevents the negative effects of extreme moods. This will take a muslim closer to true peace of mind and the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This further aids one in obtaining a balanced mental state and peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Peace of Mind & Body - 14

Many people strive to achieve more in this material world even though they have already gained much worldly success. Even though, Islam does not prohibit this type of mentality as long as unlawful things are avoided a muslim should understand an important reality. It is obvious that peace of mind is not obtained with many worldly possessions, such as wealth. In fact, these people are often the ones who end up depressed to the point they even commit suicide. Human worldly desires have been created in such a way that no matter what one obtains they always desire more irrespective of their faith and social status. For example, Pharaoh who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, obtained every worldly blessing imaginable yet, he still did not obtain peace of mind and satisfaction. Instead his desire for more pushed him to such a stage that he desired to be worshipped like a God. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 24:

"And said, 'I am your most exalted lord.'"

No matter what desires a person fulfils it only leads them to desiring more things. A person who owns two houses wants three; the millionaire wants to become a billionaire. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6439, that the person who has one valley of gold would only desire another. A muslim who desires true peace of mind, which is more valuable than the treasures of the Earth, should therefore limit their worldly desires. The more they limit them and only fulfil their necessities and responsibilities

the more they will obtain peace of mind. This mentality closes the doors of preoccupation and striving for more worldly things which in turn gives rest to both the mind and body. If a muslim couples this with striving in the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, then they will be granted true peace of mind which extends to every aspect of their life in both worlds. But the more worldly desires they have the more their mind and body will be preoccupied with them and thus the further from true peace of mind they will be.

Peace of Mind & Body - 15

It is important for muslims to adopt a positive mind-set as it is a great tool to aid them when dealing with difficulties so that they remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. Whenever a person faces difficulties they should always understand a truth that the difficulty could have been much worse. If it was a worldly problem they should be grateful it was not an affliction affecting their faith. Instead of dwelling on the immediate sadness which accompanies the difficulty they should concentrate on the end and the reward which is waiting for those who demonstrate patience for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. When a person loses a few blessings they should recount the countless blessings they still possess. In each difficulty, a muslim should remember the verse of the Holy Quran which reminds muslims that there are many hidden wisdoms to difficulties and tests which they have not observed. Therefore, the situation they are facing is better than the situation they desired. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

To conclude, a muslim should reflect on these facts and others so that they adopt a positive mind-set which is a key element in dealing with difficulties in a way which leads to countless blessings in both worlds. Remember, the cup is not half empty it is instead half full.

Peace of Mind & Body - 16

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a case of suicide which was caused by depression and severe grief. It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as He has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit].”

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue, will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life. This can even apply to those who only fulfil the basic obligatory duties and fail to utilise the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as their time, health and wealth, as they disobey Him through these blessings.

Peace of Mind & Body - 17

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the difficulty in balancing and fulfilling all of one's worldly duties in the modern world and the stress associated with this. Muslims should understand that if they desire to avoid this common stress, they should prioritise each task and responsibility correctly. This is only possible when one does this according to the teachings of Islam instead of their desires or the desires of others. Whenever one reorders the list of priorities advised in Islam, it always leads to difficulties and stress. For example, when one strives excessively in the material world beyond their needs and necessities thereby neglecting their other responsibilities, such as correctly raising their children, it will lead them to nothing but stress from both what they acquired and from their misguided children. The one who does not prioritise their duties correctly is like the university student who prioritises having fun over preparing for their exams. This only leads them to obtaining a poor degree and a difficult job. Because of prioritising incorrectly they gave up an easy life through a good job for a few years of fun at university which leads to a difficult life in the long run.

Incorrectly prioritising affects every aspect of one's life and it can lead to sins if one obeys people over Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is important for muslims to follow the priority set by Islam which begins with obeying Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, above all others. This is only possible to obtain through seeking and acting on Islamic knowledge. Through this, a muslim will prioritise everything and everyone in their life correctly and use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will lead to the precious and rare gift of peace of mind and body in this world and everlasting bliss in the hereafter. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Peace of Mind & Body - 18

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Muslims are often tricked into believing that even though learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, leads to Paradise in the hereafter, yet if they choose this path then they will be miserable in this world. They are convinced that peace in this world simply lies in fulfilling one's desires whereas Islam teaches one to control their desires, not unleash them. So in their minds, peace in this world and peace in the next world are both obtained through two different paths. This is completely untrue, as Allah, the Exalted, has in fact placed peace of mind in both worlds in one single straight path, the path of Islam. One must not be fooled by social media, fashion and culture and instead always bear in mind that the Controller of hearts, which is the station of peace of mind, is none other than Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, Allah, the Exalted, alone decides who obtains peace of mind in this world, just like He alone decides who obtains Paradise in the hereafter. Therefore, one must seek peace of mind in both worlds in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

If one incorrectly believes that peace of mind in this world and peace in the next world are obtained through two different paths, they will inevitably try to obtain peace of mind in this world and delay practically preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will only prevent them from obtaining peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Peace of Mind & Body - 19

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is widely accepted that when an invention fails to fulfill its primary goal of existence then it is deemed a failure, even if it possesses many good characteristics. For example, a phone with many excellent features, such as a high quality camera, will be deemed a failure if it cannot be used to make phone calls, which is its primary function. Similarly, humans are an invention and creation of Allah, the Exalted, with a specific purpose. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me."

The only purpose of mankind is to worship, meaning, obey Allah, the Exalted. This sincere obedience involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses every blessing they were granted by Allah, the Exalted, in ways pleasing to Him.

But the person who fails to fulfil their purpose will lead a meaningless and purposeless life, even if they achieve much worldly success. This is quite evident when one observes society. They will clearly see that those who have achieved much worldly success are the most anxiety-ridden,

stressed, depressed and addicted to drugs and alcohol than anyone else. This occurs as they fail to fulfil their purpose of creation, which causes them to misuse the blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

A Muslim must not fool themselves into believing they have a purposeful life if they fail to use their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, even if they fulfil the basic obligatory duties, such as the five daily obligatory prayers. One's purpose extends beyond a few daily and annual rituals and practices. It in fact encompasses one's every breath and every aspect of one's life e.g. financial, private, social, work and family life. The Muslim who fails to fulfil their purpose is like a vase which looks beautiful from the outside, as they fulfill the basic obligatory duties, but just like the vase is empty inside, so is their life. This is the reason why many Muslims who fulfill the basic obligatory duties still experience mental stress and depression as they fail to understand that their purpose encompasses their whole life, not just a few hours in the day or a few days out of the year.

One of the main reasons this reality is overlooked by many people, including Muslims, is due to blind imitation of society, fashion, culture and social media. When one fails to use their intellect, then they will falsely believe that a meaningful life is found in worldly things, such as wealth, a career, friends or family. One must avoid acting like cattle and instead learn from Islamic teachings and by observing the life choices of others and their

consequences. When one correctly does this, they will understand that a meaningful existence does not lie in pursuing worldly things, it only lies in fulfilling one's purpose of creation, just like value is given to an invention which fulfils its primary function of creation. Failing to recognize this is the real tragedy of mankind.

All people must strive to fulfill their purpose of creation, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as only this leads to a meaningful, purposeful and peaceful life in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Peace of Mind & Body - 20

One of the most fundamental aims of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is for people to achieve peace of body and mind in this world. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

This is only achieved when one sincerely obeys and follows these two sources of guidance, which in turn guides one to using the blessings they have been granted correctly, meaning, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and helps them prioritize the things and people in their life correctly so that they obtain peace of mind and body. This is like a library of

books which have been arranged in the correct order, which allows for a person to easily find the book they need with minimal hassle. Whereas, the one who fails to follow the guidance of the two sources of guidance, thereby misusing the blessings they were granted and incorrectly prioritizing the things and people in their life, is like a library of books which are completely unorganized. Finding a specific book in this library would be extremely difficult, stressful and time consuming and a person may not even find the book they desire.

Just like an organized library, when one sincerely obeys and follows the two sources of guidance they will place everything in its proper place within their life, thereby leading them to peace of mind and body. Chapter 10 Yunus, verses 57-58:

"O mankind, there has come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers. Say, "In the bounty of Allāh and in His mercy - in that let them rejoice; it is better than what they accumulate.""

Peace of Mind & Body - 21

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is commonly accepted that in order to obtain peace of mind and body one must obtain an organized and balanced mental and physical state. For example, an organized and balanced state is like a library of books which are organized in a good order, which allows one to find the book they desire easily. Whereas, an unorganized and imbalanced state is like an unorganized library of books which makes finding a specific book difficult and stressful. An organized and balanced state of mind and body allows one to place everything and everyone in their appropriate place in one's life whereby they avoid being extreme in some aspects of their life while neglecting other aspects. This leads to peace of mind and body.

But it is important to note that one cannot achieve this outcome while following society, fashion and culture, as these things are fickle by nature and often swing from one extreme to another. For example, what was considered deviant behaviour a few years ago is considered the norm today. What society deemed the most important thing, such as getting married, a few generations ago, is now being dismissed as a waste of time and energy. Not so long ago, society would urge people to be self-sacrificing and prioritize the feelings and happiness of others over oneself. Whereas, nowadays society urges people to only care about fulfilling their own desires and ignore the criticism of others whether it is constructive or not. Meaning, one should only consider their own happiness under every circumstance. The examples are endless of how society, social media, fashion and culture have always swung from one extreme to another. This attitude will always prevent one from obtaining an organized and balanced state of mind and body, which leads to peace of mind and body.

The only way one can avoid swinging from extremes is by learning and acting on Islamic teachings, as they are tailored for human nature, something which is timeless, and these teachings do not sway with fickle things like society, social media, fashion and culture. When one holds firmly onto Islamic teachings they will place everything and everyone in their correct place within their life and avoid being extreme in some aspects of their life while neglecting other things. This will ensure they obtain an organized and balanced state, which in turn leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Peace of Mind & Body - 22

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Even though a person is deceived into straying away from the source of peace of mind and body in both worlds, namely, the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, by many factors, only two major factors will be discussed.

The first factor is the attitude which encourages one to blindly follow the majority of people. One of the main arguments every nation made against their Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, who called them to a better and higher code of living, was how could the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, and their small number followers be right, while the vast majority of people who rejected them, be wrong. When one observes society, social media, fashion and culture they will believe that true peace of mind lies in fulfilling one's desires and obtaining worldly luxuries, such as wealth, a big house, businesses and a career. Whereas, those who followed the teachings of Islam, insist that peace of mind only lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. In order to avoid being deluded by the attitude which encourages one to follow the majority, one should observe and reflect on the people who gain the worldly things mentioned earlier and how those things only increases their stress, anxiety and depression and encourages them towards substance abuse and even suicide. On the other hand, those who sincerely obeyed Allah, the Exalted, live with peace of mind, even with a lack of worldly luxuries.

The second factor is when the Devil convinces a person that if they give up their worldly desires and instead use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, then they will never be happy in this world, as happiness and peace of mind is directly connected to fulfilling one's desires. Even though this sounds convincing none the less, it is nothing but a deception. The truth is that peace of mind is a mental state which is found in one's heart. It is Allah, the Exalted, alone who controls the hearts of people. If He chooses, He makes peace enter it and if He chooses, He makes darkness and constriction enter it. These outcomes have nothing to do with what worldly blessings one possesses. These outcomes are tied directly to how much or little one sincerely remembers and obeys Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If one obeys Allah, the Exalted, then He will lodge peace into their heart. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”

And chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace.”

Whereas, the one who disobeys Allah, the Exalted, will find darkness in their heart, even if they have the world at their feet. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

They may experience moments of fun and entertainment but overall their life will be miserable. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

As stated earlier, these two outcomes are obvious when one observes the news, social media and those who enjoy worldly luxuries compare to those who strive to obey Allah, the Exalted.

To conclude, a Muslim must avoid these two factors which prevent a person from obtaining peace in both worlds. An aspect of this is obtaining strong faith by learning and acting on the teachings of Islam. This will

ensure they choose the right path in life, even if that means they oppose the mentality of the majority of people. A small price to pay to obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 33:

"...Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth, so let not the worldly life delude you and be not deceived about Allāh by the Deceiver [i.e., Satan]."

Peace of Mind & Body - 23

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Many people, including Muslims, search for advice and information which can alleviate their mental problems, such as stress, anxiety and depression, from worldly sources, such as self-help gurus, psychologists and counsellors. Even though some of the information and advice they can obtain from these sources is good, as it is connected to the teachings of Islam, yet the vast majority of their advice and information will not be useful, as it is restricted by too many factors which prevents it being entirely useful. For example, a counsellor's knowledge and experience will always be limited, irrespective of how much learning they have undertaken or how many patients they have counseled. Their perspective will always be limited, as they can only observe and experience the mentality and behaviour of other people from a restricted point of view. They only know what the patient shares with them and are unaware of many feelings and emotions that their patient does not share with them, as they may struggle to put it into words. Researchers are limited by the sample of people they have taken during their experiments. These limitations are connected with age, race, ethnicity, social class, religion, and many more. In addition, a counsellor or self-help guru may well possess an unconscious bias for or against certain attitudes and behaviour because of their own experiences. For example, a male counsellor will more easily understand the mindset of a man. The counsellor may well lean towards a certain mindset because of their personal relationships. For example, a counsellor may well unconsciously picture their ex-wife when conducting couples therapy sessions. All of these biases are inevitable as humans are shaped by their experiences and are heavily influenced by their subconscious.

The only one that can completely aid the mental health of a person is the one who is completely unbiased in every situation and circumstance.

The one whose knowledge completely encompasses every type of emotion, behaviour, thought and characteristic a human can ever experience. The one who knows the cure for every mental issue. The one who is free of making mistakes in diagnosing mental conditions. The only One who can achieve all this and more is Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 14:

"Does He not know those whom He created..."

Therefore, if a person desires the cure for their mental issues they must seek it from Allah, the Exalted, through gaining and acting on the teachings of Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Through this method, the worldly sciences which run in parallel with Islamic teachings will then benefit them also. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 10:

"We have certainly sent down to you a Book [i.e., the Qur'ān] in which is your mention. Then will you not reason?"

And chapter 10 Yunus, verse 57:

"O mankind, there has come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts..."

Peace of Mind & Body - 24

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Whenever one aims to enjoy the lawful luxuries of the material world they will always notice how the sweetness it produces in their heart disappears extremely quickly. For example, when one returns from a holiday, the sweetness of the holiday experience quickly disappears, and so they begin to plan the next holiday in order to re-experience that sweetness. When one finishes watching a film or television show, the sweetness experienced quickly disappears and as a result they desire to watch something else in order to re-experience the sweetness again. This is true for all sinful or vain things. It is this desire to re-experience the sweetness of things which drives the entertainment industry. On the other hand, the sweetness experienced from anything which is connected to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is something that always endures in one's heart. For example, the Muslim who sincerely performed the Holy Pilgrimage continues to feel the sweetness of it in their heart decades later. The Muslim who sincerely completes a charity project, such as building a Mosque or sponsoring an orphan, continues to feel the sweetness of that act of charity for years to come. Because of this reality, the one who desires to feel inner sweetness continuously should seek it in things which please Allah, the Exalted, and not in vain or sinful things.

Secondly, this reality is a powerful sign which indicates what truly has value in this world. Anything which endures has value but the things which quickly fade away are fickle, and therefore have no real value or worth. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 96:

"Whatever you have will end, but what Allāh has is lasting..."

The value of each person is according to what they pursue. If they pursue what is enduring and valuable, then they will have value and their peace and actions will endure. But if they pursue what is fickle and valueless, then their sense of enjoyment will quickly disappear and their life will also be valueless.

Peace of Mind & Body - 25

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Even though society, social media, fashion and culture urge people to seek peace of mind in fulfilling their desires, it is obvious when one reflects on Islamic teachings and the mental health and state of those who try to obtain peace of mind through fulfilling their desires, that this common belief is completely wrong. Those who fulfill their desires are often the furthest from peace of mind, as they are often hounded by mental issues such as stress, anxiety, depression and suicidal tendencies and are often drowned in addiction to drugs and alcohol.

One must understand that obtaining peace of mind and fulfilling all of one's desires can never mix, such as fire and ice can never mix. The more one seeks one of these two, the further they will go from the other, just like the one who journeys towards the east will travel further from the west. Therefore, one must pick and strive for one or the other, obtaining both, in all circumstances, is simply not possible. As fulfilling one's desires takes them away from peace of mind and towards all sorts of mental and health problems, the wise option is to seek peace of mind and give up pursuing all of one's desires. As Allah, the Exalted, created and controls the human spiritual heart, the abode of peace, they must understand that they will only obtain it through His obedience. This involves using the blessings He has granted one in ways pleasing to Him. This is explained in the Holy Quran and in the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by using their blessings correctly, the more peace of mind they will obtain. Peace of mind which is more valuable and satisfying than fulfilling any worldly desire one might have. Meaning, through peace of mind one is more than compensated for giving up their worldly desires in both this world and the next. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

On the other hand, the one who uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to themselves, has only given up peace of mind and therefore they will face a miserable life in both worlds, even if they fulfil all their worldly desires and obtain everything the world has to offer. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

To conclude, one must understand that obtaining peace of mind and fulfilling all of one's worldly desires cannot be joined together in this

world. One must choose one over the other and it does not take a scholar to decide which one should be chosen.

Peace of Mind & Body - 26

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. The Muslims who travel to special holy places, such as Mecca and Medina, often state that they find a lot of peace of mind and body there. Even though holy places that have a special connection to Allah, the Exalted, do receive a greater portion of His mercy, which is a reason for their peaceful state, none the less, another important reason is the actions of the Muslims that travel there. Typically the Muslims who journey to these holy places increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in their actions and speech, throughout their day. For example, they will offer their obligatory prayers at the Mosques, use their resources, such as their time, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and become more cautious in committing verbal and physical sins. These are the conditions Islam has set for obtaining peace of mind and body. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life..."

In most cases, when Muslims return to their homelands, they do not maintain this obedience in their day to day activities, meaning, they do not continue using the resources and blessings they have been granted, such as their time, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is true even if they fulfill the few obligatory duties of Islam. Instead, they concentrate more on using their blessings in ways pleasing to themselves and other people. This prevents them from fulfilling the conditions set by Islam for obtaining peace of mind and body. As a result, they begin to incorrectly believe peace lies in a specific place when it actually lies in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and is therefore not bound by time or space.

Peace of Mind & Body - 27

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One the main reasons Muslims who fulfil the basic obligatory duties, such as the five daily obligatory prayers, still fail to achieve peace of mind is because they take Islamic teachings out of their context and apply them in their lives according to their own desires. While they believe they are acting on the teachings of Islam, they are in fact only following nothing except their own desires. This prevents them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This causes them to forget Allah, the Exalted, during their day to day activities, even if they manage to fulfill the basic obligatory duties. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

A person who desires to fulfill their lawful yet vain desires will take certain verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, out of context in order to support their desires and aims. For example, this person will misinterpret chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

"But seek, through that which Allāh has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and do not forget your share of the world..."

They will claim that this verse encourages one to enjoy lawful worldly pleasures. Even though Islam does not prohibit lawful worldly desires, yet it warns against over indulging in them, as this prevents one from preparing practically for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is the meaning of this verse. One must not abandon the world nor abandon fulfilling their necessities in it. Instead, they should use their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, without neglecting their necessities or the necessities of their dependents.

Another example is when parents quote the verses and Hadiths which mention the high virtue of parents and use them in order to prove that their children must always obey them and never disagree with them. Even though the teachings of Islam does emphasis the importance of treating parents with the utmost respect and kindness but none the less, this does not mean they should blindly obey them under every situation. They must not obey them if it involves the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. And children do have a right to disagree with their parents in lawful things, as long as they maintain respect. They are even allowed to make lawful choices their parents disagree with. For example, if the parents desire their daughter to marry their relative, she has the full right to decline the proposal, especially if she has valid reasons, such as the man not being able to financially support her if they did get married.

Taking Islamic teachings out of their proper context is a major cause of misguidance and failing to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. It can lead to avoidable arguments especially, when one misuses Islamic teachings against others. The cure for this is to firstly adopt a good intention, which is to please Allah, the Exalted, under all

circumstances and then to gain and act on Islamic knowledge correctly. This leads to fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people and peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Peace of Mind & Body - 28

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the false notions which some have accepted is that they expect not to face difficulties in this world if they obey Allah, the Exalted. First of all, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, goes beyond the few obligatory duties, such as the five daily obligatory prayers, and involves using all the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner will be granted peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

But this does not mean one will not face tests in the form of difficulties. This is inevitable, as this is the very purpose of living in this world. Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 2:

"[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is better in deed..."

But the one who sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, will be granted peace of mind and body, even when they face difficulties. They will be granted the strength to deal with the difficulty so that they overcome it both mentally and physically, while maintaining obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This is similar to a patient who has been anaesthetized so that they do not feel the pain of a medical procedure.

On the other hand, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, will also face difficulties. But in their case, they will not be granted peace of mind or body during it. They will not have the mental or physical strength to overcome it and as a result they will continue to disobey Allah, the Exalted, without connecting their disobedience to their difficulties. Instead, they will wrongfully blame the cause of their difficulties on things and people, such as their relatives and friends. This will cause them further problems, as they will attempt to remove these things from their lives. They will attempt to escape their difficulties through worldly things, such as entertainment, drugs and alcohol. But all these things will only increase their anxiety, stress and depression. They will thus continue to live a dark and constricted life, even if they have the world at their feet. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

This outcome is quite evident when one observes the news and social media.

To conclude, each person will face tests and difficulties but through their choice and behaviour, they will either obtain peace of mind and body in both worlds or obtain a difficult and dark life in both worlds.

Peace of Mind & Body - 29

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Some Muslims incorrectly believe that as long as something is lawful, one can indulge in it as much as they please. This attitude contradicts Islamic teachings, as something being lawful does not mean one should indulge in it. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. In addition, the following verse makes it clear that pursuing one's desires, even lawful ones, can lead to misguidance. Chapter 38 Saad, verse 26:

"...and do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allāh. Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allāh will have a severe punishment for having forgotten the Day of Account."

This verse outlines the reason why indulging in desires, including lawful ones, leads to misguidance. When one excessively pursues their worldly lawful desires it will distract them from practically preparing for the Day of Judgement. This preparation involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Pursuing one's desires will always encourage them to use their blessings incorrectly, which in turn leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

One must therefore be kind to themselves and minimise pursuing their lawful desires and instead concentrate on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. As Allah, the Exalted, controls one's spiritual heart, the abode of peace, and controls one's judgement in the hereafter, He will ensure they obtain peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Peace of Mind & Body - 30

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. People often struggle to balance pursuing their happiness and pleasing people, such as their relatives. The issue with following social media, fashion and culture is that it will cause one to adopt an extremist attitude. They will either swing to one side whereby they pursue the pleasure of people, which is something advocated by many cultures. This will only cause one to behave like a headless chicken who rushes between serving different masters in order to please them. But as people are different, what pleases one person will upset another. So this person will never please everyone and therefore never obtain peace of mind or body themselves. Or they will swing to the other extreme side, whereby they stop caring about the rights of others and their feelings and instead only pursue their own desires, in an attempt to obtain peace of mind. They will refuse to listen to any constructive criticism, something which is required for the positive development of a person and a society. They will neglect their responsibilities in respect to others, which will only lead to further problems for them and the rest of society. In pursuing their desires, they will easily forget Allah, the Exalted, as they are too busy using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to themselves, as they no longer care about anything else. This will lead to a loss of peace of mind and body. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

The one who follows social media, fashion and culture will always swing from one extreme to another. The only way to achieve a balanced state of mind and body is to obey Allah, the Exalted, the Creator of the human mind and body. When one does this, they will prioritise pleasing Him above all else. As a result, they will not rush from person to person seeking to please them. Instead, they will fulfil the rights of others according to the teachings of Islam, as this is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded, but they will not expect nor hope for any payback or gratitude from people. So whether people are pleased with them or not does not matter, as they aim to please Allah, the Exalted, in all their affairs. But as they obey Allah, the Exalted, they will not wrong others and instead fulfill their rights. They will accept any constructive criticism, as long as it runs in line with the teachings of Islam. This will lead to a positive improvement in their conduct towards Allah, the Exalted, and people. As they aim to please Allah, the Exalted, they will use their blessings in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will lead to a balanced state of mind, which leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Peace of Mind & Body - 31

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. When people obtain any type of worldly success they feel a sense of satisfaction with the efforts they put into achieving that success. For example, a university student will often feel satisfied with the many hours of revision they endured when they obtain their degree. The greater the worldly goal, the greater the satisfaction one feels. Similarly, those who obtain Paradise in the hereafter will be satisfied with the efforts they put into obtaining it during their lives on Earth. In fact, this feeling of satisfaction is the first thing mentioned when the people of Paradise are described in chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 8-9:

"[Other] faces, that Day, will show pleasure. With their effort [they are] satisfied."

Therefore, each Muslim must reflect on how much satisfaction they desire to feel on Judgement Day and work accordingly. If one desires to feel this satisfaction, just like they look forward to feeling worldly satisfaction, they should strive to achieve it through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Peace of Mind & Body - 32

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Unlike worldly success, which is extremely fickle by nature, religious success is not always obvious to people. Worldly success is always connected to material gain, such as fame, fortune and authority, and is therefore obvious to people. But a Muslim must understand that real lasting success, which is connected to Islam, is not always obvious. In most cases, religious success involves peace of mind and body, something which is hard to observe. In addition, Allah, the Exalted, does not guarantee obvious worldly success to those who sincerely obey Him, as it is fickle in nature and does not lead to peace of mind and body. Obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, the following verses discuss the outcome of maintaining one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during difficulties. None of the rewards are connected to worldly success. They are instead connected to spiritual success, which is often difficult to observe. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 155-157:

"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allāh, and indeed to Him we will return." Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided."

Therefore, a Muslim must not believe that obeying Allah, the Exalted, leads to worldly success, such as wealth and authority, as in most cases

the two are not connected. One should instead aim higher and prefer spiritual success, meaning, peace of mind, as it endures through every situation in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Equality - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that one's lineage will not benefit them on Judgement Day if they lack good deeds. Allah, the Exalted, bestows mercy and ranks to people in the hereafter according to their righteous deeds. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 132:

“And for all are degrees [i.e., positions resulting] from what they have done...”

A muslim should therefore not be fooled into believing their lineage will save them from punishment. If anything, a person who has a pious muslim in their lineage should strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, so that they reach their level and live up to the name and status Allah, the Exalted, granted them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was granted the highest station in both worlds yet, he still strived so hard in worship that his feet became swollen. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7124. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 519, that only Allah, the Exalted, and the righteous believers are his friends and are close to him. He did not give superiority to lineage and neither should muslims.

Islam is a religion of equality and therefore all will be treated and judged by Allah, the Exalted, in this world and in the next according to their intention and efforts, all other things, such as gender, lineage and brotherhoods have no value. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”

Equality - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers, such as social castes and sects, thereby believing some are better than others, Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that, in this respect, all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”

In addition, the main Hadith under discussion also indicates that women should not waste their time debating and arguing about their position in the world in respect to men. Instead, they must understand that superiority does not lie in copying or outdoing men. It only lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

Finally, as Islam judges people based on their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, so should people. They must not deem others inferior to them or others based on worldly standards, as this often leads to pride and failing in fulfilling the rights of others, both of which lead to disaster in both worlds.

The real status of a person is hidden, as one's intention is hidden from people, even if they can observe their actions. Therefore, it is foolish to look down upon others, as they may well be superior to them.

Equality - 3

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage, as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made from dust. He concluded that people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects, thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups, Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people, such as one's race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them, as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf, yet, fail to adopt his inner noble character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these muslims.

Finally, remembering the origins of mankind will prevent one from adopting pride, an atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Pride only encourages one to look down on others, even though everything good they possess was created and granted by Allah, the Exalted. Pride will also encourage one to reject the truth, when it does not originate from them.

Therefore, pride in anything, such as one's pious ancestor, must be avoided at all costs.

Equality - 4

This is connected to chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13 of the Holy Quran:

“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”

Piety is achieved when one strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. Unfortunately, the Devil has tricked many women into debating the status of women compared to men. Even though, Islam has granted women such honour as no other institution or faith ever has such as placing Paradise, which is the ultimate bliss, beneath the feet of a woman namely, one's mother. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3106. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3895, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best man is the one who treats his wife the best. There are countless other examples. But the point to note is that women should not be bothered about comparing themselves to men as this is not what Allah, the Exalted, desires. Instead, women should strive to adopt piety and if they achieve it then they will become superior to every man or woman who possesses less piety than them. This is the benchmark which separates who is superior to whom. And it is clear from this verse that it is not based on one's gender. If one turns the pages of history they will observe great female muslims who concentrated on this important task instead of arguing and debating about the differences between men and women and as a result they became

better than the vast majority of men and women. In reality, if muslim women were granted all the rights they dreamed of even then it would not make them superior to others until they adopted piety. This is quite evident when one observes the media and those who behave as they please. And this fact will be made crystal clear in the next world. Therefore, if a muslim desires to be superior to others they should seek it in piety not in arguing and debates.

Hope - 1

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker, as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims, whose punishment will be reduced by it, will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs, they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey Him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”

Finally, a Muslim should not adopt wishful thinking by believing that as they are a muslim, they will enter Paradise some day, even if they must enter Hell first, as a consequence of their sins. No one is guaranteed to leave this world with their faith. The one who abandons sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, is in great danger of leaving this world without their faith. It is important to understand that faith is like a plant which must be nourished and taken care of, through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. When the plant of faith is neglected it may well die, leaving one with nothing to ensure their success in both worlds.

Hope - 2

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to, and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, thereby misusing the blessings they have been granted and still expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and grant them mercy in both worlds. This is not true hope, it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they slip up, they sincerely repent and then hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to keeping the crop healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life, as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death, a muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him, as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877.

Hope - 3

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a common thing many people do namely, placing hope in people. The problem with this attitude is that as people are not Angels they are bound to make mistakes and fall short of people's expectations and hopes. In addition, as times change and each person progresses along their own path, which is separate from the path of all others, it will cause them to become preoccupied with their own things, such as their responsibilities. This change often causes them to let down the people who place hope in them even if they do not mean to do this. Hoping in people who are not perfect will generally lead to disappointment. A common example of this especially, in the Asian community, is when parents place hope in their children. They hope that their children will choose the path in life they advise them to and hope their children will make taking care of their parents their ultimate priority. Even though, children should definitely take care of their parents as this is their duty, parents should not place their hope in them as this can often result in disappointment. People should instead fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and towards people as Allah, the Exalted, has commanded, and then place hope in Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should never forget that the source of all help is Allah, the Exalted, and the creation are only a means. The source can still help them even without the means they have in mind if He so chooses. But the means by themselves cannot help without the Source. If Muslims place their focus and hope on the means then they will be disappointed. But if they place it on the Source then nothing can prevent them from gaining the support of Allah, the Exalted.

So it is important for Muslims to place their hope in the correct place which must be supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, then they will find the peace of mind and satisfaction they desire in both worlds.

Hope - 4

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the funeral of a muslim who openly and persistently committed major sins. Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins and giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

"...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people."

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. A muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins, especially major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers, and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties, as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy, it is merely wishful thinking, which has no weight or significance in Islam. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Hope - 5

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In this world a person possesses many different hopes and many different fears. As a result, people use the resources they were granted in order to obtain their hopes and avoid their fears. But the strange thing is that on Judgement Day these fears and hopes will vanish and no one will give a second thought about them, except for the single fear of Hell and hope for Paradise. It is this reality that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, understood and was a major reason why they lived the way they did. They knew that all one's worldly fears and hopes will be reduced to just one fear and one hope on Judgement Day, so as a result they made their hopes and fears into one hope and one fear, while they were still living on Earth. This ensured they used the worldly blessings and resources they were granted in order to obtain their single hope of Paradise and to escape their single fear of Hell. This allowed them to obtain peace in this world and in the next. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”

This does not mean one should not fear or hope for anything other than Paradise and Hell. This discussion means, all the things they fear and hope for in this world must be rooted in the single fear of Hell and hope of

Paradise. In other words, all of one's fears and hopes must be directly connected to the single fear of Hell and single hope for Paradise. All other fears and hopes should be discarded, as they are unimportant in this world, even if this not obvious to a person, as they will be unimportant on Judgement Day. Behaving in this manner will increase one's comfort and peace in this world and ensure they are adequately prepared for escaping their single fear of Hell and obtaining their single hope for Paradise, in the hereafter.

Socializing - 1

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, that a person cannot become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This does not mean a muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a muslim's faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. It advises that the muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to understand that desiring good for others will not cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a muslim forbids evil and offers advice, which contradicts the desire of others, they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing their blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaaffifin, verse 26:

“...So for this let the competitors compete.”

This encouragement will also inspire a muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

Socializing - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever relieves the distress of a muslim Allah, the Exalted, will relieve a hardship from them on the Day of Judgment.

This shows that a muslim is treated by Allah, the Exalted, in the same way they act. There are many examples of this within the teachings of Islam. For example, chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“So remember Me; I will remember you...”

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who shows mercy to others will receive mercy from Allah, the Exalted.

A distress is anything which causes someone to fall into anxiety and difficulty. Therefore, the one who eases such a distress for another, whether worldly or religious, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be

protected from a hardship on Judgment Day by Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in different ways in many Hadiths. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449, that the one who feeds a hungry muslim will be fed the fruits of Paradise on the Day of Judgment. And the one who gives a drink to a thirsty muslim will be given a drink from Paradise by Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgment.

As the difficulties of the hereafter are much greater than those found in the world, this reward is held back for a muslim until they reach the hereafter. This also indicates that a Muslim should always be more concerned with the hardships of Judgement Day over the hardships of this world. One must always remember that the hardships of this world will always be temporary, less severe and less far reaching than the hardships of the hereafter. This understanding will ensure they strive hard in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in order to avoid the hardships of the hereafter.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that whoever conceals the faults of a muslim will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted, in both this world and the next. This is quite evident if one ponders over it. The people who are accustomed to exposing the faults of others are the ones whose faults are made public by Allah, the Exalted. But the one who conceals the faults of others is considered by society as someone who has no obvious faults.

There are two types of people in respect to this advice. The first are those whose wrong actions are private meaning, this person does not commit

sins openly nor exposes their sins in a boastful manner to others. If this person slips up and commits a sin which becomes known to others, it should be veiled as long as this does not cause harm to others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 19:

“Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter...”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to overlook the mistakes of those who strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4375.

The second type of person is the wicked one who commits sins openly and does not care about people finding out about them. In fact, they often boast about the sins they have committed to others. As they inspire others to act in an evil way, exposing their faults in order to warn others does not contradict this Hadith. Nor will this person have their faults exposed by Allah, the Exalted, in return for exposing the faults of this wicked person, which is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546, as long as they are exposing the faults of another for the correct reason.

It is important to act on this part of the main Hadith under discussion, as the humiliation of being exposed on Judgement Day, in front of the entire

creation, is beyond imagination. So a person should not fool themselves into believing that as being exposed in this world is bearable for them, they will also be able to bear being exposed on Judgement Day.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Allah, the Exalted, will continue helping a muslim as long as they are helping others. A muslim must understand that when they strive for something or are aided by another person to complete a particular task the outcome may be successful or end in failure. But when Allah, the Exalted, helps someone with anything, a successful outcome is guaranteed. It is important to note that this divine aid is obtained when one aids others in both religious and lawful worldly matters. In addition, a Muslim must help others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, if they desire this reward. This means they should not expect, hope nor ask for any signs of gratitude from who they are aiding.

Muslims should therefore, for their own sake, strive to help others in all good things so that they receive the help of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

Socializing - 3

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body suffers pain the rest of the body shares in its pain.

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others and as a result they fail their duty in supporting others according to their means. A muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help, such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-centered and self-absorbed and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

This Hadith also indicates the importance of unity and equality in Islam, as one must aid other muslims according to their means, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity or anything else.

The same way a person desires to remove their own distress, they must strive to behave in this manner for others, as the main Hadith clearly indicates that for a Muslim there is no difference between them facing a distress or another Muslim facing a distress. It is one in the same.

Finally, even though a muslim cannot remove all the problems of the world but they can play their part and help others according to their means as this is what Allah, the Exalted, commands and expects.

Socializing - 4

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins, will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they were only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially

able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

In addition, this Islamic principle is an excellent way to ensure the growth of one's good deeds even after they die. The more one guides others to what is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more their good deeds will increase. This is the legacy a Muslim must concern themselves with, as all other legacies, such as property empires, will come and go, and they will not benefit them after they die. If anything, they will be held accountable for earning and hoarding their empire while their inheritors enjoy the empire the deceased left behind.

Socializing - 5

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a muslim must fulfil both aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is to fulfill the rights of people, which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim and believer until they keep their physical and verbal harm away from a person and their possessions, irrespective of the religion they follow.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving, a muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others.

It does not make sense to accumulate righteous deeds, such as prayers and fasts, only to hand them over to others on Judgement Day. One must instead strive to increase their righteous deeds and minimize their sins by fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, according to the teachings of Islam.

Socializing - 6

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. The people on the lower level keep disturbing the people on the upper level whenever they desire to access water, so they decide to drill a hole in the lower level so that they can access water directly. If the people on the upper level fail to stop them they will all surely drown.

It is important for muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to Islamic knowledge, in a gentle way. A muslim should never believe that as long as they obey Allah, the Exalted, other misguided people will not be able to affect them in a negative way. A good apple will eventually get affected when placed with rotten apples. Similarly, the muslim who fails to command others to do good will eventually be affected by their negative behavior whether it is subtle or apparent. Even if the wider society has become heedless, one should never give up advising their dependents, such as their family, as not only will their negative behavior affect them more but this is also a duty on all muslims, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Even if a muslim is ignored by others they should discharge their duty by persistently advising them in a gentle way which is supported by strong evidence and knowledge. Commanding good and forbidding evil while ignorant and with bad manners will only push people further away from the truth and right guidance, which in turn will affect the whole community negatively.

Only when one commands good and forbids evil correctly will they be protected from the negative effects of society and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 164:

"And when a community among them said, "Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allāh is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?" they [the advisors] said, "To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him.""

But if they only care about themselves and ignore the actions of others, it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Socializing - 7

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised the importance of objecting to evil things in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4340. This Hadith clearly shows that it is a duty on all muslims to object to all forms of evil according to their strength and means. The lowest level, as mentioned in this Hadith, is rejecting the evil with one's heart.

This shows internally approving evil actions is one of the ugliest of those things which are forbidden. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4345, that the one who is present when an evil is committed and denounces it, is like the one who was not present. But the one who was absent and approved the evil deed is like the one who was present and silent when it was committed.

The first two aspects of objecting to evil, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, are through one's physical actions and speech. This is only a duty on a muslim who has the strength to do so, for example, they will not be harmed by their actions or words.

It is important to note, objecting to evil with one's hand does not refer to fighting. It refers to correcting the evil actions of others, such as returning the rights of someone which have been unlawfully violated. The one who is in a position to do so yet, refrains from doing so has

been warned of a punishment in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4338.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised muslims in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, that they should not fear the creation in respect to speaking the truth. In fact, the one who allows the fear of the creation to prevent them from objecting to evil things has been described as the one who hates themselves and will be criticized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4008. It is important to note, this does not refer to the one who remains silent out of fear of being harmed as this is an acceptable excuse. It instead refers to the person who remains silent because of the status people hold in their eyes, even though they have nothing to fear if they speak against the evil which is occurring.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4341, advises that a person can give up objecting to evil things through their actions and speech when others obey their greed, follow their incorrect opinions and desires and when they prefer the material world over the hereafter. It does not take a scholar to conclude this time has arrived. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 105.

“O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided...”

But it is important to note, a muslim should continue with this important duty in respect to their dependents as this is a duty on them according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928, and in respect to those they feel physically and verbally safe from, as this is the superior attitude.

Objecting to evil things which are apparent is what the main Hadith under discussion refers to. Meaning, it does not grant permission to muslims to spy on others in order to find evil things to object to. Spying and anything associated with it in this respect are forbidden. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed...do not spy...”

It is important to note, that a muslim must object to evil according to the teachings of Islam and not their own desires. A muslim may believe they are acting for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, when they are not. This is proven when they object to evil in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, what is considered a good deed may well become a sin because of this negative attitude.

A muslim must object to evil in a gentle way, preferably in private according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is not possible to achieve without learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. The opposite of these characteristics will only push people away from sincerely repenting and may lead to further sins as a result of angering

others. Finally, one must object to evil at the right time, as constructively criticizing someone at the wrong time, such as when they are angry, is unlikely to be effective in positively influencing them.

Socializing - 8

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause one to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The essence of this is learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The main Hadith also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly by people, they must also treat others with good character.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer and Muslim until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

Finally, according to the main Hadith, if good character will be the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgement Day in favour of a person then this means that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgement Day against a person will be bad character. Bad character towards Allah, the Exalted, by failing to sincerely obey Him, and towards the creation, by failing to treat them how one desires to be treated by others.

Socializing - 9

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6806, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned seven groups of people who will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

This shade will protect them from the horrors of the Day of Judgment which includes the unbearable heat caused by the Sun being brought within two miles of the creation. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421.

One of these groups includes the just ruler. This in fact includes every muslim who strives to fulfil their duties as a ruler and shepherd over their dependents, such as their children. This is the one who strives to fulfil all the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people especially to those under their care. It includes those muslims who have no dependents as each person is a ruler over their own body and worldly blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, such as wealth. So when one rules over their body by using each organ and limb according to the teachings of Islam and utilizes each blessing they possess in a way pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, then they too are counted as a just ruler. The one who acts justly always aims to please Allah, the Exalted, even if it leads to the displeasure of people and their inner Devil. In reality, the just muslim is the one who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, their own rights and the rights of people.

The next person who will be granted shade on Judgment Day are those who love other people for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means they interact, advise and help others only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. They prove their love through actions not just through their words. They never demand nor expect anything in return for what they do from people and only hope in reward from Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is the foundation of Islam as each muslim will be judged according to their intention, not just their deeds. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Those who act for the sake of people will be told on Judgment Day to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Acting with sincerity not only earns countless reward in both worlds but it ensures one places their hope in Allah, the Exalted, instead of people. When one places hope in people they will eventually, sooner or later, be let down by them which leads to enmity, broken relationships, bitterness and other sins and negative characteristics.

Loving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a branch of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This is because controlling one's love is a very difficult thing to do. Whoever achieves this will find the other duties of Islam straight forward.

Socializing - 10

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of speech and actions which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others, as this contradicts sincerity towards others. This has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be held accountable for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. This also includes not getting involved in other people's business, as this often leads to harming others. A Muslim must speak in a positive way in respect to others in their presence and absence, just like they desire other people to talk positively about them.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property, they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which

is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree, will go to Hell.

To conclude a muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions, as they are the physical proof of one's belief which is needed to obtain success in both worlds. In addition, a muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

Socializing - 11

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, listed three signs of a hypocrite. Even though a muslim will not lose their faith if they act on these characteristics yet it is vital to avoid them as a muslim who acts like a hypocrite may well end up with them on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031.

The first characteristic is that when they speak, they lie. Meaning, they lie often. Lying is unacceptable whether it is a small lie, which is often called a white lie, or when one lies as a joke. All of these types of lying are forbidden. In fact, the one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive someone, has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315.

Another popular lie people often speak believing it is not a sin is when they lie to children. This is undoubtedly a sin according to Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4991. It is plain foolishness to lie to children as they will only adopt this sinful habit from the elder who lies to them. Behaving in this manner shows children lying is acceptable when it is not acceptable according to the teachings of Islam. Only in very rare and extreme cases is lying acceptable for example, lying in order to protect the life of an innocent person.

It is vital to avoid lying as according to one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, it leads to other sins, such as backbiting and mocking people. This behaviour leads one to the gates of Hell. When a person continues to lie they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar. It does not take a scholar to predict what will happen to a person on Judgment day who has been recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar.

All muslims desire the company of the Angels. Yet, when a person lies they are deprived of their company. In fact, the stench that is omitted from the mouth of a liar causes the Angels to move a mile away from them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1972.

The one who persists in lying will find that it infects their intention meaning, they begin to perform good deeds for other than to please Allah, the Exalted. This leads to a loss in reward in both worlds. In addition, it will also corrupt their actions, as physical sins become easier to do when one's tongue is addicted to lying.

The next characteristic of hypocrisy mentioned in the main Hadith is that they betray their trusts. This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed and outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they gain further blessings, as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret, unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst muslims. One must treat the trusts between them and people in a way they desire others to treat the trusts that are between them.

In addition, these trusts include the people under one's care, such as dependents. A Muslim must strive to fulfill these trusts by fulfilling the rights of these people according to the teachings of Islam. For example, it is a duty on a parent to encourage their children to learn, understand and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The final sign of hypocrisy mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is breaking one's promises. The greatest of promises a muslim has made is with Allah, the Exalted, which was agreed when one accepted Him as their Lord and God. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

All other promises made with people must also be kept, unless one has a valid excuse especially, the ones a parent makes with children. Breaking promises only teaches children bad character and encourages them to believe being deceitful is an acceptable characteristic to possess. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2227, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will be against the one who makes a promise in His name and then breaks it without a valid excuse. How can the one who has Allah, the Exalted, against them on Judgment Day possibly succeed? It is always safer not to make promises with others where possible. But when a lawful promise is made, one must strive hard to fulfill it.

Socializing - 12

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised to treat people with good character. This is extremely important as good character will be the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003. One should adopt this by learning and acting on the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is the character taught by the Holy Quran. Through this one will replace their negative characteristics with good ones. Those who mistreat others, even if they fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, will find that on Judgment Day their good deeds are given to their victim and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them. This might cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Socializing - 13

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected positively by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected negatively by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by them. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a muslim to concentrate on the material world over practically preparing for the hereafter. Meaning, they will hinder them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will become a great regret for them in both worlds, even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs, as using the blessings one has been granted in vain or sinful ways is the root of forgetting Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter, according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a muslim must practically show their love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world and adopting their lifestyle and behaviour. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates their love for them and their ultimate company in the hereafter. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

"Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous."

Socializing - 14

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that oppression will become a darkness on the Day of Judgment.

This is vital to avoid as those who find themselves plunged in darkness are unlikely to find their way to Paradise. Only those who will be provided a guiding light will be able to do this successfully. Committing oppression will therefore prevent one from obtaining this light.

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin, a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin, the more their heart will become encompassed by darkness. This will prevent them from accepting and following true guidance in this world. This in turn, will lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaaffifin, verse 14:

“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by failing to fulfill the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of the worldly blessings they possess, such as their body and wealth. This trust is fulfilled when one uses every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the Creator and Owner of all blessings.

The greatest of these blessings is faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Faith is like a plant which must be constantly taken care of and nourished through learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. The death of this plant will extinguish the light of one's faith, which will result in them being left in darkness in both worlds.

The final type of oppression is when one mistreats others. Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive these sins until the oppressor's victim forgives them first. As people are not so merciful, this is unlikely to happen. Then justice will be established on Judgment Day where the oppressor's righteous deeds will be given to their victim and if necessary the victim's sins will be given to the oppressor. This may lead to the oppressor being hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One must avoid this outcome by treating others how they wish to be treated by people.

A muslim must avoid all forms of oppression if they desire a guiding light in this world and in the next.

Socializing - 15

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2016, the mother of the believers, the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, described some of the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. She advised that he was neither obscene nor loud-mouthed. He never replied evil with evil and instead forgave and overlooked the faults of others.

First of all, all muslims must understand that it is a duty on them to adopt the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alea Imran, verse 31:

“Say, “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...”

And Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

A muslim must never act or speak in an obscene way as this is hated by Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 464. Behaving in this manner is the very essence of bad character. And as good character will be the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, one can predict the evil outcome of the one who reaches the Day of Judgment as an obscene person. In addition, the one who is obscene in speech is much more likely to enter Hell, as it only takes a single evil word to cause one to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. Put simply, true faith and obscenity can never gather in a single person.

A muslim should not be loud-mouthed as this leads to the loss of respect from others, especially one's relatives. The loud-mouthed often comes across aggressive and can easily frighten others. This contradicts the behavior of a true muslim. A muslim must be gentle, kind and approachable when dealing with others, as this shows the true and peaceful nature of Islam. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 19:

"...and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys."

Finally, a muslim must understand that as people are not perfect they are bound to make mistakes. Just like a person desires to be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, they should overlook and pardon others. Put simply, how one treats others is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. It

is foolishness not to forgive others yet expect the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

But it is important to note that forgiving others and blindly trusting others are two separate things. One is encouraged to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, but they must also take the necessary steps to avoid being wronged by their abuser again. Meaning, they should adjust their behaviour in order to protect themselves so that history does not repeat itself, while continuing to treat others according to the teachings of Islam.

Socializing - 16

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person will become more honoured when they forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This occurs as the one who forgives others will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, which by definition causes their honour to increase. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

This shows that true honour does not lie in exalting over people but it lies in being merciful and forgiving. Simply put, if one desires to be forgiven for their mistakes they should forgive others. But it is important to note that one is encouraged to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, but they must also take the necessary steps to avoid being wronged by their abuser again. Meaning, they should adjust their behaviour in order to protect themselves so that history does not repeat itself, while continuing to treat others according to the teachings of Islam. Forgiving others does not mean being naive in respect to others.

Socializing - 17

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6548, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that Allah, the Exalted, will shade the two people who loved each other for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

Allah, the Exalted, will grant shade to these two people on a day when the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421. If people struggle to cope with the heat of the Sun during summer can one imagine the intensity of the heat on Judgment Day?

Loving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, leads to such a reward as this emotion is extremely difficult to control. And whoever is blessed with controlling it will find fulfilling the duties of Islam straight forward. These duties involve fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly meaning, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. It is because of this reason loving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, has been declared an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others financially, emotionally and physically, according to one's means. Counting the favors one does for others not only cancels the reward but also proves their insincerity, as they only love gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”

Any type of negative feeling towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided. This is achieved when one removes the negative characteristics they possess and replaces them with good characteristics, by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

To conclude, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions, not just words. This is in fact an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This is best achieved when one treats others in a way they desire people to treat them.

Socializing - 18

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that Allah, the Exalted, will not show mercy to the one who does not show mercy to others.

Islam is a very simple religion. One of its fundamental teachings is that how people treat others, is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. For example, those who learn to overlook and forgive the mistakes of others will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Those who support others in beneficial worldly and religious matters such as emotional or financial aid will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. This same Hadith advises that the one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, if one treats others with kindness and respect, according to the teachings of Islam, they will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted. And those who mistreat others will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted, even if they fulfill the obligatory duties which are connected to Him, such as the obligatory prayers. This is because a muslim must fulfill both duties in order to achieve success namely, the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people.

An easy way to obtain divine mercy is to simply treat others how one desires to be treated by people. This is true for all people, irrespective of their faith, and in fact extends to all creatures.

Finally, it is important to note a muslim will only be treated kindly by Allah, the Exalted, if they treat others kindly for His sake. If they do it for any other reason than they will undoubtedly forfeit the reward mentioned in these teachings. The foundation of all acts and Islam itself is one's intention. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Socializing - 19

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6014, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he was encouraged to treat neighbours kindly to such an extent that he thought that a neighbour would become an heir of their muslim neighbour.

Unfortunately, this duty is often neglected even though treating one's neighbour kindly is an important aspect of Islam. First of all, it is important to note that a person's neighbour in Islam includes all those people who are living within forty houses in each direction to a muslim's home. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, Number 109.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once connected belief in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgment Day to treating a neighbour kindly in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 174. This Hadith alone is enough to indicate the seriousness of treating neighbours kindly. A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 119, warns that a woman who fulfilled her obligatory duties and offered much voluntary worship would go to Hell because she mistreated her neighbours through her speech. If this is the case for the one who harms their neighbour through words, can one imagine the seriousness of physically harming one's neighbour?

A muslim must be patient when mistreated by their neighbour. In fact, a muslim should treat them kindly in cases like this. Repaying good with good is not difficult. A good neighbour is the one who repays harm with good. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

"And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend."

But it is important to note that one should not allow their neighbours or others to cross the limits and they should defend themselves when it is appropriate. Overlooking and pardoning applies in minor situations which will not negatively affect them in the future, nor will it resurface between the people involved, again and again.

A muslim should respect the private space of their neighbour's property but at the same time greet them and offer them help without being too intrusive. They should be supported by whatever means is available to a person, such as financial or emotional support.

A muslim should conceal the faults of their neighbours when they will be no negative consequences. The one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted. And the one who exposes the faults of others, Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults and publicly disgrace them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4880.

To conclude, one must treat their neighbour in a way they desire their neighbours to treat them, which includes showing kindness and respect.

Socializing - 20

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6551, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the muslim who visits a sick person is in an orchard of Paradise until they return.

The first thing to note is that this Hadith includes visiting any sick person, irrespective of their faith. Even though, this is undoubtedly a great deed, it is important for a muslim to firstly perform this righteous deed solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. If they do it for any other reason, such as to show off to people, they will not gain reward from Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, they should fulfil the etiquettes and conditions of visiting the sick, according to the teachings of Islam, in order to obtain their reward. In this day and age it is easy to contact the sick and their family beforehand in order to ensure they visit them at the appropriate time, as a sick person will be resting throughout the day and this will minimise the disruption caused to their family. They should not stay long thereby, causing trouble to the sick person and their relatives. They should control their actions and speech so that they avoid all types of sins such as gossiping, backbiting and slandering others. They should encourage the sick to be patient and discuss the rewards associated with it and generally discuss beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter.

If a person is told to return at another time by the sick person or their household, a Muslim must accept this without holding any grudges, as this has specifically been commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 28:

"...And if it is said to you, "Go back," then go back; it is purer for you. And Allāh is Knowing of what you do."

Only when one behaves in this manner will they obtain the reward outlined in the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If they fail in this, they will either gain no reward or they may well be left with sins, depending on how they behaved. Unfortunately, many muslims enjoy performing this righteous deed but fail to fulfill its conditions correctly. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

"No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward."

Socializing - 21

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins, such as backbiting and slander. A muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set affects people from a family unit to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others, as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits, such as bitterness.

It is important for muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them, they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Always interpreting things negatively also gives rise to a powerful mental illness namely, paranoia. The one who adopts paranoia will always suspect others of bad things. This can be extremely destructive to relationships, such as marriages.

One should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way, which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships, feelings and unity. Whereas, always interpreting things in a negative way encourages one to always think and act negatively towards others, even when their behaviour is good. This only prevents one from fulfilling the rights of others, something which has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

Socializing - 22

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4815, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people must fulfill the rights of the public road when they meet up in public.

The first thing advised in this Hadith is that Muslims should lower their gaze and not look at things which are unlawful to them. In fact, one should protect each organ of their body, such as their tongue and ears in the same way. This is achieved when one avoids the things which do not concern them.

The next thing advised in this Hadith is that they should keep their harm away from others. This includes both harm in the form of speech, such as foul language and backbiting and harm caused through physical actions. In fact, a person cannot be a true believer and Muslim until they keep their physical and verbal harm away from people and their possessions. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. A Muslim should instead assist others in public, according to their means. If they cannot do this, then the least they can do is keep their physical and verbal harm away from others.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that one should return the Islamic greeting of peace to others. This includes initiating the Islamic greeting of peace through one's words and showing peace to others in one's actions and other speech. It is pure hypocrisy to

extend peace to others through one's words and then harm them through their actions and other speech.

Finally, the main Hadith under discussion advises muslims to command good and forbid evil. This should be carried out according to the three levels discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2172. The highest level is to do it with one's actions, within the bounds of Islam. The next level is to do it with one's words. And the lowest level is to do it with one's heart meaning, secretly. This duty must always be fulfilled according to Islamic knowledge and in a gentle way. Where possible, this should be done privately in order to avoid embarrassing others, as this can often cause one to reject good advice. This should also be done at the appropriate time, for example, after an angry person has calmed down, as good advice at the wrong time is often ineffective. Often muslims advise the correct thing but as they do it in a harsh way, they only drive people further away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is therefore vital to combine correct knowledge with kind behavior so that the good advice affects others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

As these characteristics are difficult to adopt and implement publicly, one should choose the safer option and minimize socializing with others in public, as it often leads to more harm than good.

To conclude, it is important to note that a muslim should adopt and show these characteristics towards all people, irrespective of their faith.

Socializing - 23

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

Envy is a serious and major sin because the envier's problem is not with another person. In reality, their problem is with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They believe Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake when He allocated a particular blessing to another person instead of them.

Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the envied person, which is undoubtedly a sin. The worst kind is when the envier strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing themselves. Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing their blessing. Even though this type is not a sin, it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and praiseworthy if it is over a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second person who can be lawfully envied is the one who uses their knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

An envious muslim should strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person envied, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them, until their envy becomes love for them. They must never let their envy prevent them fulfilling the rights of others, according to the teachings of Islam.

A Muslim must always remember that Allah, the Exalted, always allocates blessings according to His infinite knowledge and wisdom. Meaning, He gives each person what is best for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Therefore, instead of envying others, one must busy themselves in using the blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in ways pleasing to Him. This will lead to an increase in blessings, as this attitude is showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

In addition, this will lead to peace of mind, which the persistent envier never obtains. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Socializing - 24

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1337, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who offers bribes and the one who takes bribes are both cursed.

A curse involves the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs, true lasting peace and success in both worldly and religious matters is not possible. Whatever worldly success one obtains, such as wealth, through a bribe, will become a source of great difficulty, stress and punishment in both worlds, unless one sincerely repents. As the bribe is unlawful, any good deed which it is used on will be rejected and recorded as a sin. Even if the bribe taker somehow manages to fulfill their obligations towards Allah, the Exalted, their sins against people may well lead them to destruction on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

In addition, without the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, the three aspects of faith are simply not possible to fulfill correctly namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

Unfortunately, in this day and age the major sin of bribery has become very common in all parts of the world. The only difference is that in third world countries it is done openly and in more developed countries, secretly. In most cases, bribery involves a person offering gifts to

influential people, such as a judge, in order to gain something which is not theirs. The only time a bribe will not be recorded as a sin is when one is forced to offer a bribe in order to recover their own property. The curse in this case is on the one who takes the bribe.

It is important to note, if muslims as a whole desire to eliminate bribery and other corrupt practices, then they must avoid them themselves. Only when this correct attitude is adopted on an individual level will it affect those in social and political positions of influence. The reason these people act in this way is because they observe the society as a whole acting on corrupt practices themselves. But if society, on an individual level, rejected these practices, no person in a position of social or political influence would dare act in this way, as they know the people would not stand for it.

Socializing - 25

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4102, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to obtain the love of people.

A muslim can obtain the love of people by avoiding and desiring their worldly possessions. In reality, a person only behaves negatively towards others when they feel others actively desire their possessions or when others actively compete for the worldly things they themselves desire. Meaning, the fear of losing what one possesses and losing out on the things which they desire through competition with others, can lead to negative feelings towards others. If a muslim instead occupies themselves with acting on the first part of this Hadith, it will prevent them from competing for the excess worldly things others desire, as the vast majority of these desires are for unnecessary worldly things. And if a muslim keeps their harm away from the self and possessions of others, which according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, is the sign of a true believer, then they will gain the love of people also.

Socializing - 26

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever avoids arguing, even if they are right, will be given a house in the middle of Paradise.

It is important to understand that the characteristic of a true muslim is not to argue or debate in order to promote themselves and their opinion. They should instead present the information in order to promote the truth. This applies to both worldly and religious matters. The one who aims to promote the truth will not argue. Only the one who is trying to promote themselves will. Contrary to what many believe winning arguments does not increase one's rank in any way. The only time one's rank in both worlds' increases is when they avoid arguing and instead present the truth or accept it when it is presented to them. A muslim should avoid going back and forth with others when discussing things, as this is a characteristic of arguing. It is this correct mentality which has been indicated in Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 125:

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best...”

A muslim should understand that their duty is not to force people to accept something. Their duty is to simply present the truth as being

forceful is a characteristic of arguing. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

"So remind you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller."

A muslim should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements, over time it can cause enmity to build up between them and others, which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even lead to the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this, it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbor negative feelings towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themselves to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themselves always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues, due to the difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding this principle is a branch of finding peace in this world.

One should not argue with others who disagree to the clear teachings of Islam. Instead, they should not take them as a friend, as one will be positively or negatively affected by their companions. Instead, one should maintain respect towards them and fulfill their rights, according to the teachings of Islam, while avoiding socializing with them unnecessarily.

Socializing - 27

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 290, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who spreads malicious gossip will not enter Paradise.

This is the one who spreads gossip, whether it is true or not, which causes problems between people and leads to fractured and broken relationships. This is an evil characteristic and those who behave in such a manner are in fact human devils, as this mentality belongs to none other than the Devil. He always strives to cause separation between people. Allah, the Exalted has cursed this type of person in the Holy Quran. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

“Woe to every backbiter and slanderer.”

How can one expect Allah, the Exalted, to fix their problems and bestow them with blessings if this curse has surrounded them? The only time tale bearing is acceptable is when one is warning others of a danger.

It is a duty on a muslim not to pay any attention to a tale bearer as they are wicked people who should not be trusted or believed. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance...”

And chapter 24 An Nur, verse 12:

"Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think good of themselves [i.e., one another] and say, "This is an obvious falsehood"?"

A muslim should forbid the tale bearer from continuing with this evil characteristic and urge them to sincerely repent. As commanded in the Holy Quran, a muslim should not harbor any ill will against the person that supposedly said something bad about them or others. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

This same verse teaches muslims not to try to prove or disprove the tale bearer by spying on others. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“...And do not spy...”

Instead the tale bearer should be ignored. A muslim should not mention the information given to them by the tale bearer to another person or mention the tale bearer as this would make them a tale bearer as well.

Muslims should avoid tale bearing and the company of tale bearers as they can never be worthy of trust or companionship until they sincerely repent. One must remember that the one who gossips about others with a person, will also gossip about that person with others.

Finally, as the tale bearer wronged people, they will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victims forgive them first. As people are not so merciful and forgiving, this may lead to the tale bearer giving their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, the talebearer will take the sins of their victims on Judgement Day. This may cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Finally, the warning in the main Hadith of losing out on Paradise, can easily occur for a tale bearer, as the malicious gossip they initiated can easily spread like wildfire across the community and even the world, through social media. As a result, the tale bearer who initiated the gossip will have a share in the sin of every person that discusses this piece of gossip. And their sins will continue to increase even after their death, as long as the gossip they initiated continues to be discussed. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674.

Therefore, one must avoid this dangerous outcome by always avoiding gossiping about others, just like they dislike for others to gossip about them. If one must speak about others, they should do so in a positive way otherwise they should remain silent.

Socializing - 28

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and therefore responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things, such as wealth, and internal things, such as one's body. A muslim must fulfill the responsibility of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things, their tongue to utter only lawful and beneficial words and their wealth in beneficial and virtuous ways.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life, such as relatives and friends. A muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights, such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil, according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others, especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should

continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one's children. A muslim must guide them by leading by example, as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier, and teach their children to do the same. The root of this involves gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

To conclude, according to this Hadith, everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them, as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted, and will therefore be questioned about on Judgement Day. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 34:

"...And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned."

Socializing - 29

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, listed five rights a muslim owes another muslim.

Firstly, they are to respond to the greeting of peace, even if replying contradicts their desires. More importantly a muslim must fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace practically by showing peace and kindness towards others through their speech and actions. It is extremely hypocritical to extend the Islamic greeting of peace to someone and then harm them through their actions or other words. In addition, this peace must be shown to others who are not present also. For example, the two Muslims who greet each other must not harm others through their speech or actions either. This is the true meaning of the Islamic greeting of peace.

The next thing advised in the main Hadith under discussion is visiting the sick. A muslim should try to visit sick muslims in order provide them physical and psychological support. It would be difficult to visit all sick muslims but if each muslim at least visited their sick relatives then the vast majority of the sick would obtain this support. A Muslim must contact the sick person and their household before visiting them in order to arrange a convenient time. All forms of vain or sinful speech and actions must be avoided, such as gossiping, otherwise a muslim will only earn sins instead of blessings. They should not remain long in order to avoid causing discomfort to the sick person or their household.

Next, a muslim, when possible, should attend the funeral of other muslims, as each attendee supplicates for the deceased to be forgiven and benefits from being reminded of death and practically preparing for it, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Just like one desires others to attend their funeral and supplicate for them, they too should do this for others. In addition, attending a funeral is an excellent way to determine whether the family of the deceased needs any further support, such as financial support. Each Muslim should aid them according to their means, just like they would like the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need. In fact, the one who aids others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will gain His support. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should accept the invitation for meals and social events, as long as no unlawful or disliked activities take place, which in this day and age, is quite rare. An important point to note is that some muslims attend social events where unlawful or disliked things occur and cite this Hadith to support their actions. One should not misinterpret the divine teachings in order to fulfil their own desires, as this is clear misguidance and an invitation to divine punishment. One should attend the social events where lawful things are taken place and beneficial worldly and religious things are discussed. One must be on guard to ensure they avoid vain and evil actions and speech otherwise avoiding socialising is better for them.

Finally, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising muslims to supplicate for the muslim who praises Allah, the Exalted, after they sneeze. Generally speaking, this encourages one to always think and behave positively towards others, especially Muslims. They

should strive to benefit others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, thereby not desiring nor hoping for any gratitude from them, according to their means, such as a supplication on their behalf. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

Socializing - 30

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that it is not lawful for a muslim to abandon another muslim for more than three days.

This applies to those who abandon other muslims for worldly reasons. Even though it is lawful to abandon someone over a religious reason, it is far superior to maintain ties with them and continue the duty of kindly commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. This behavior will be far more effective in encouraging the sinful to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, than abandoning them. A muslim should continue to help others in matters of good and forbid them from matters which are bad. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Muslims have been commanded to unite and not separate from each other, as unity leads to strength. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were few in number but as they remained united they overcame entire nations. Unfortunately, not fulfilling this important duty is one of the reasons why the general strength of the muslims has weakened over time even though their number has increased.

In worldly matters, Muslims have been given three days where they can avoid another Muslim. The reason for this concession is that controlling one's anger can be difficult and most people require time in order to achieve this and time to realise the worldly issue is not worth severing ties over. Those who struggle to control their anger should take advantage of this concession and avoid the one they are angry with, as one often does and says things while angry which leads to further problems in both worlds. Islam is perfectly suited to the mentality of humans and therefore takes this into consideration when setting out a code of conduct.

The one who abandons other Muslims for more than three days over worldly issues, should fear that they may well be abandoned by the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as one is treated by Allah, the Exalted, according to how they treat others. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376.

Socializing - 31

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 28, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a characteristic which leads a muslim to Paradise namely, keeping one's harm away from people. This is vital to fulfill as according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, a person cannot be a true muslim or believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from a person and their possessions, irrespective of their faith. The one who mistreats others will find that justice will be established on Judgment Day. They will be forced to give their good deeds to their victims and if required, take their sins. This may cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One must instead treat others how they wish people to treat them. This will ensure they not only keep their harm away from others but also aid others according to their means, in order to please Allah, the Exalted.

Socializing - 32

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1921, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person is not one of the true muslims if they fail to show mercy to the young, respect the elders and command good and forbid evil.

All people irrespective of their faith, age or social status must be treated with respect and kindness. In fact, a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. And this undoubtedly includes being treated by others in a kind way. In addition, one cannot be a true Muslim or believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

Showing mercy to the young includes guiding them towards the obedience of Allah, the exalted, through fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the worldly blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Teaching the young must be done through leading by example, as this is the most effective way in guiding others especially, the youth. They should be encouraged to only accompany good people as a person adopts the negative or positive characteristics of their companions. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. Finally, they should be shown that Islam is a simple and easy religion which allows them to have plenty of lawful fun. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4835. Being merciful to the young will teach them to also be merciful to others. The one who shows mercy to others will receive mercy from Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376.

Respecting elders includes being patient with them and not arguing with them. A muslim can disagree with elders but good manners and respect must be maintained at all times. They must be supported at all times which includes physical, emotional and financial support. It is important to note that showing respect to elders does not mean one should allow them to disobey Allah, the Exalted. One should object to evil in a respectful and kind manner and never let someone's age prevent them from doing so. This has been indicated in the last part of the main Hadith under discussion. Simply put, how one treats elders is how they will be treated by others if and when they become elderly.

Finally, a muslim must gently command good and forbid evil according to Islamic knowledge. Harshness often pushes people away from the truth. When possible, one should advise others in private, as doing so publicly can embarrass people. An embarrassed person is less likely to heed good advice. A muslim should continue with this duty whether it affects people or not, as this is not under their control. They will be rewarded for their sincere intention and efforts. One should never give up in this duty in respect to their dependents, as it is their duty to guide their dependents. Finally, one should strive to act on their own advice to the best of their ability, otherwise their advice to others will become ineffective.

Socializing - 33

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6593, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of backbiting and slander.

Backbiting is when one criticizes someone in their absence in a way which would be displeasing to them, even though it is the truth. Whereas, slander is similar to backbiting except that the statement is not true. These sins mainly involve speech but can include other things, such as using hand signals. These are both major sins and backbiting has been compared to eating the flesh of the corpse of one's brother, in the Holy Quran. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“...And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”

It is important to understand that these sins are worse than most of the sins which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted. This is because the sins between a person and Allah, the Exalted, will be forgiven by Him, if the sinner sincerely repents. But Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive a backbiter or a slanderer until their victim forgives them first. If they do not, then on Judgment Day the good deeds of the backbiter/slanderer will be given to their victim as compensation and if needed, the sins of the victim will be given to their backbiter/slanderer until justice is established. This may well cause the backbiter/slanderer

to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Backbiting is only lawful when one is warning and protecting another person from harm or if a person is resolving a complaint against another person with a third party, such as a legal case.

One should avoid backbiting and slandering by firstly gaining knowledge on the evil consequences of these major sins. Secondly, a person should only utter words which they would happily say in front of the person, full well knowing they would not take it in an offensive way. Thirdly, a muslim should only utter words about another if they would not mind someone else saying those or similar words about them. Meaning, they should talk about others how they want people to talk about them. Finally, a muslim should concentrate on fixing their own faults and when done sincerely, it will prevent them from backbiting and slandering others.

One should avoid the company of backbiters and slanderers, as they are trouble makers, who will, sooner or later, backbite or slander them. They should gently warn others from these major sins, as long as they are safe from physical harm. They should never believe the gossip spoken about others, as the vast majority of gossip is either completely false or it is mixed up with many lies. One should instead defend the honour of others, just like they would like people to defend their honour in their absence. The one who behaves in this manner will be protected from Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931. One should ignore the gossip they hear about others and never let it influence their behaviour towards them.

Instead, they should fulfill the rights of others, according to the teachings of Islam.

A Muslim must never be fooled by the fact that backbiting and slandering others has become normalized in society. The sins of others will never reduce the severity of one's sins in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted, nor can the sins of others justify committing sins. This is a foolish attitude which a worldly judge would not even accept, then how can a Muslim expect Allah, the Exalted, the Judge of judges, to accept it?

Socializing - 34

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1855, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some characteristics which will allow a muslim to enter Paradise in peace.

The final characteristic mentioned is spreading the Islamic greeting of peace to others. A muslim should fulfill the true meaning of this righteous deed by extending peace to all through their actions and words. It is hypocritical to offer the Islamic greeting of peace to someone and then harm them through one's actions and speech.

A true muslim and believer must keep their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others, irrespective of their faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. It includes aiding others according to one's means, such as emotional or physical support. The one who behaves in such a manner will be provided with support from Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. Simply put, a muslim should treat others how they desire to be treated by people through their speech and actions.

Socializing - 35

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who is independent of the creation. This means that a muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength, in order to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people unnecessarily, as this habit leads to dependence on them and it reduces one's trust in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens, whatever is destined to be their provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. A muslim should focus on using their resources, such as their physical strength, and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them. From a religious point of view, one can become incorrectly dependent on others when they believe that a person, such as a religious and spiritual teacher, will suffice them in gaining success in both worlds through their supplications and intercession. This attitude only encourages laziness, as one believes they are free to behave how they wish and will still achieve success in both worlds through their spiritual teacher. A Muslim must avoid this misguidance and instead follow in the footsteps of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who had the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet worked hard in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Him. This is the correct attitude which must be adopted.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being anonymous. This means a muslim should not strive in worldly or religious matters in order to obtain fame or prominence. This attitude can

lead to many sins, such as showing off, which leads to the destruction of one's reward. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that seeking fame is more destructive to one's religion than two wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. Instead, a muslim should strive to fulfill their duties and if they gain prominence, they must maintain sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, without altering their obedience to Him in order to please people, as this leads to destruction in both worlds.

Socializing - 36

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cursed, three times, the one who lies in order to make people laugh.

Joking while sticking to the truth is not a sin but it is difficult to do consistently. The one who jokes excessively will eventually slip up and utter words which are sinful, such as lying, backbiting or mocking others. Therefore, it is safer to avoid joking excessively, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1995. In addition, the one who jokes excessively even if they manage to always speak the truth and not offend anyone, will encounter a spiritual disease which has been warned of in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4193, namely, a spiritually dead heart. This occurs to the person who jokes and laughs excessively, as this mentality demands they always think and discuss funny issues and avoid serious issues. The matter of preparing for death and the hereafter are serious issues and if one avoids thinking and discussing them, they will never correctly prepare for them. This lack of preparation will cause their spiritual heart to die. In fact, the more seriously one ponders over the hereafter the less they will laugh and joke. This is indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6486.

Joking too often also causes others to lose respect for them. This can cause many problems, such as not being taken seriously when they command good and forbid evil, even if it is to their own children.

Excessively joking often leads to enmity between people, as one can easily take things seriously. This leads to fractured and broken relationships. In fact, many people often end up physically and emotionally hurt because of jokes. The vast majority of arguments and fights amongst people in society begin as jokes.

In addition, when joking one should avoid laughing loudly or full-mouthed, as this is disliked in Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, laugh was a smile, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6092.

A muslim should avoid lying at all costs even when joking, as this would lead to them obtaining a house in the middle of Paradise. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4800.

This does not mean a muslim should not joke at all. Joking from time to time while avoiding sins, such as lying, is acceptable as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, occasionally joked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1990. It is joking excessively which is disliked and sinful if it is related to a sin. It is a sin to intentionally misinterpret a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to fulfil one's own desires. If the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, rarely joked without committing any sins, then muslims should do the same and not exceed the bounds in order to fulfil their own desires.

In addition, there is a big difference between being cheerful with people, such as smiling, and joking excessively. Being cheerful is a blessing of Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 301. Even smiling to make others feel comfortable is recorded as an act of charity according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1970. So one should not believe avoiding joking excessively means that people should always be in a sad and depressed mood.

Socializing - 37

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2673, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who acts as a false witness in order to unlawfully take the possessions of others, will meet Allah, the Exalted, while He is angry with them.

It is important to note, this applies to taking the possessions of all people, irrespective of their faith. This will be the outcome even if one obeys Allah, the Exalted, in other aspects of their life, such as offering the obligatory prayers. Unfortunately, this commonly occurs especially, in third world countries, where muslims file false claims in a legal court in order to take something which does not belong to them, such as wealth and properties. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2654, it is one of the greatest of major sins. In fact, this Hadith places perjury next to polytheism and disobedience to parents. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has done the same in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 30:

“...So avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoid false statement.”

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2373, gives a severe warning to a person who does not sincerely repent from being a false witness. If they fail to repent they will not move on the Day of Judgment until Allah, the Exalted, sends them to Hell. In fact, the one who acts as a false witness in order to take something which they have no right to

will be sent to Hell even if the thing they took was a twig of a tree. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353.

Being a false witness is such a serious sin as it includes many other terrible sins, such as lying. The false witness commits a sin against the person who they are testifying against. This sin will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until the victim forgives them first. If they do not, the false witness's good deeds will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the false witness in order to establish justice on Judgement Day. This may well cause the false witness to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. The false witness also commits a sin if they testify on someone else's behalf so that the latter can take something which they have no right to. This attitude clearly challenges the command of the Holy Quran which advises muslims to not aid each other in evil but instead help each other in good things. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."

The false witness will also commit further sins by using something which has become unlawful because of the way it was obtained. For example, if a person obtained wealth in this manner and then gave it in charity it would be rejected and recorded as a sin, as Allah, the Exalted, only accepts the lawful. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. In fact, anything they do with the wealth will be absent of grace and a sin as it was obtained unlawfully.

It is a duty on all muslims to always speak the truth whether it is in normal everyday conversations or under an oath in a legal court case. Lying in all forms leads to sins which in turn lead to Hell. The one who continues lying will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. It does not take a scholar to work out what is most likely to happen to someone on Judgment Day who has been labelled a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Finally, taking the possessions of others unlawfully, through a legal court case or by other means, must be avoided, as this contradicts the character of a true Muslim and believer. The true Muslim and believer is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from people and their possessions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. One must treat people and their possessions in the same way they desire people to treat them and their possessions.

Socializing - 38

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1977, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against adopting characteristics that are not found in a true believer.

The first negative characteristic is insulting the honor of others. A true believer does not harm the honor of others through their speech or physical actions. Allah, the Exalted, has made the honor of muslims sacred just like their lives and possessions are sacred. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3933. The same way a true believer would not harm the self or possessions of others they must not dishonor others either. In fact, a believer is the one who protects the honor of others when they are being violated. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931, that whoever protects the honor of others, Allah, the Exalted, will protect them from the fire of Hell. One must instead talk about and treat others in a way they desire people to talk about and treat them.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a true believer does not curse. This is an evil habit as one is supplicating for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from something or someone. This contradicts the teachings of Islam and the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, when he was requested to curse the non-muslims of Mecca he replied that he was not sent by Allah, the Exalted, as a curser, but as a mercy to mankind. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 321. In addition, the one who supplicates for the mercy

of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from others will most likely have it removed from them, as this contradicts the behaviour of a true believer. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4905, that the curse returns back to the one who uttered it, if the person or thing they cursed does not deserve it and in most cases they do not. Therefore, muslims should not overlook this sin and ensure they do not curse things as this is not a sign of a true believer. They should instead supplicate for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to descend on all. This will lead to the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, descending on them. One will be treated according to how they treat others. If one curses others, they will be cursed but if they treat others with mercy, then they will be treated with mercy. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is committing immoral sins. This includes all minor and major sins between oneself and Allah, the Exalted, such as neglecting the obligatory prayer, and the sins between a person and others, such as backbiting. These sins are against the recognized standards of good behaviour. And it can also refer to those sins that are committed openly. These are worse than secret sins, as they encourages others to follow and commit evil deeds. This is the reason why sins of the tongue, such as backbiting, have become an acceptable practice in most societies, as it is committed in public for example, through social media. The one who commits evil deeds will bear the burden of their own sins as well as the sins they inspire others to commit. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 203. If good conduct will be the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgement Day, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, one can estimate the evilness of immorality. Generally speaking, sins associated with immorality have always been regarded as evil by all societies. One must not only abstain from immoral sins but also avoid bad company and the places where these sins more often take place. They should remain firm on this and encourage others, such as their dependents, to do the same.

The last characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a true believer is not foul. Meaning, they do not behave practically in a foul way by committing sins against others and they are not foul in language. Unfortunately, this evil characteristic has become very common amongst people who claim to have purified hearts yet, are extremely foul especially, in their language. This contradicts their declaration as what is inside reflects outwardly. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984. Finally, it is extremely important to avoid foul behaviour especially, foul language, as it only takes a single evil word to cause one to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. One must remember that foul speech often leads to foul actions, therefore it is vital for one to control their speech, so that they only speak good or remain silent, and guard their actions, so that they only use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Socializing - 39

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated some important characteristics for muslims to adopt.

One of the things mentioned is that the sign of a true believer is being kind to one's neighbour. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once connected belief in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgment Day to treating a neighbour kindly. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 174. This Hadith alone is enough to indicate the seriousness of failing to treat neighbours kindly. A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 119, warns that a woman who fulfilled her obligatory duties and offered much voluntary worship would go to Hell because she mistreated her neighbours through her speech. If this is the case for the one who harms their neighbour through words can one imagine the seriousness of physically harming one's neighbour? Kindness involves aiding them in what is good, according to one's means, such as financial, emotional and physical help. They must keep their verbal and physical harm away from them. A believer must avoid doing anything which could cause disruption and discomfort to their neighbours e.g. loud noise.

They must be patient and pardon their neighbours, as long as they do not cross the line, as Islam teaches humility without weakness. Simply put, one must treat their neighbour in a way they desire their neighbours to treat them.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a true muslim loves for others what they love for themselves. It is important to show this practically, not just declare it through words. A muslim must strive to aid others according to their means, such as emotional and physical help, just like they desire others to help them. This will cause them to obtain the support of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. Just like a person desires to succeed in both worldly and religious matters, one must aid others practically in achieving this also. The same way a muslim would like their self and possessions to be safe from the verbal and physical harm of others, which is the characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, a muslim must treat others in the same way. Behaving in this manner eliminates many negative characteristics, such as envy, enmity and spite and encourages one to adopt positive characteristics, such as gentleness, compassion and tolerance.

Socializing - 40

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2406, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to achieve salvation.

The first thing is to control one's speech. A muslim should avoid evil speech, as only a single evil word is needed to cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. A muslim should avoid vain and useless speech as it is often the first step to evil speech and it wastes one's precious time, which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day. A muslim should strive to either speak good or remain silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176. When one behaves in this manner, even their silence is counted as a good deed.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a person should not leave their home unnecessarily. Behaving in this manner leads to wasting time and both verbal and physical sins. If one truly and sincerely reflects, they will realize that the majority of their sins and the problems they encountered were due to unnecessarily socializing with others. This does not mean it was always the fault of others but it means if one avoids unnecessarily leaving their home, they would sin less and encounter less problems and difficulties. This would also free up their time to learn and act on useful knowledge, such as Islamic knowledge, which is beneficial in all aspects of one's life. Socializing unnecessarily wastes the unique blessing of time, which never returns after it passes. Those who wasted their time on vain and sinful things will face stress in this world and a great regret on

Judgement Day, especially when they witness the reward of those who utilized their time correctly. In addition, socializing unnecessarily also hinders a person from fulfilling their responsibilities and duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people. It also prevents one from the important task of self-reflection. This is needed in order to ensure one is heading in the right direction in life and whether or not they are completing their responsibilities and duties. A lack of self-reflection leads to an aimless life whereby a person has no firm direction in their worldly or religious life. Over socializing also encourages one to become dependent and clingy to people, and this always leads to emotional, mental and social problems, as one's whole life, their happiness and sadness, all revolves around people and their relationships. One can save themselves from all these negative effects by only socializing when it is necessary.

Socializing - 41

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2520, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics of a fortunate person.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is withholding excess words. Evil words must always be avoided. Vain and useless words should also be avoided, as they often lead to evil words. In addition, one must understand that the majority of problems, difficulties and arguments a person encounters are caused by unnecessary words and conversations. A muslim should therefore either speak good or remain silent, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

Socializing - 42

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who possesses the following characteristics.

One these characteristics includes socializing with scholars and the wise. A muslim should always choose their companions wisely as they will undoubtedly adopt the characteristics of their companions whether positive or negative. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. When one accompanies and follows the footsteps of the righteous they will not only adopt pious characteristics but it will prove their love for them. And this will cause them to end up with the righteous in the hereafter. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688. If one honestly reflects, they will understand that the majority of the difficulties, problems and arguments they have encountered was the result of socializing. These problems can be drastically reduced when one socializes with the correct people. In fact, socializing with the righteous will aid one in adopting the correct attitude and behaviour so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. A muslim should accompany the righteous and the wise otherwise seek seclusion, as safety lies in this especially, in this day and age.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is possessing public noble character. Meaning, this muslim displays noble character to all people, irrespective of their faith, as they understand that a true muslim and believer is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from a person and their possessions. This has been

advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. They prove their love of desiring for others what they desire for themselves through actions, not just words, as this practical implementation is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. They not only act righteously towards Allah, the Exalted, as mentioned in the last characteristic but also show noble character to the creation, as they are aware a true believer fulfills both halves of faith, namely, one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and showing good character to the creation. The one who fails to show good character to people, which involves treating others how one desires to be treated by people, will find that on Judgement Day they will be forced to hand their good deeds over to those who they wronged and if necessary, they will take the sins of the people they wronged. This may cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to avoid the mischief of evil people. This means they fulfill the important duty of helping others in good things and refuse to aid them in bad things, irrespective of who is taking part or organizing the thing. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Unfortunately, many Muslims fail in this important duty by choosing to help or not to help others depending on who is doing something, instead of observing what they are doing. This has even affected scholars and Islamic institutions, who often only support those they have a

relationship with. This must change if muslims desire to regain the social strength and influence the righteous predecessors possessed, as they always fulfilled this duty, irrespective of the people organizing or leading the good thing. Finally, this part of the Hadith also warns against bad companions and the places which are more associated with sins. Bad companions only encourage one to adopt bad characteristics and to develop blind loyalty, which often encourages one to support and take part in evil activities.

Socializing - 43

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6133, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a believer does not get stung from the same hole twice.

This means that a believer does not get fooled by something or someone twice. This includes committing sins. A true believer is not immune to committing sins. But when they happen to commit them, they do not repeat their mistake and instead learn and change for the better by sincerely repenting to Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and those who have been wronged, as long as this does not lead to further problems, promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

A true believer does not blindly trust people thereby increasing the chances of being wronged by them. But if they are fooled by anyone, they should overlook and pardon, as this leads to their forgiveness. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

But they should also change their behaviour by treading cautiously when dealing with this person in the future, thereby ensuring they do not get fooled again. There is a vast difference between forgiving others and blindly trusting them especially, after they have wronged someone.

In addition, this Hadith applies to every aspect of one's life, as a true believer is the one who constantly learns from their experiences and knowledge in order to change for the better so that they increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Finally, the main Hadith eliminates the incorrect notion of forgiving and forgetting. As mentioned earlier, forgiving others is an important part of Islam but forgetting only opens the door for people to wrong them again. Humans cannot erase their memories and nor should they. Instead, one should forgive others, strive to fulfill the rights of others according to the teachings of Islam but tread cautiously when dealing with people, especially those who have wronged them in the past, to ensure history does not repeat itself.

Socializing - 44

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1660, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned the two most virtuous people.

The second person mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the one who secludes themselves from society thereby, keeping their evil away from people and remains firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim is not allowed to behave in this manner if they possess dependents, as neglecting them is a sin. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692.

In addition, one should not avoid people in order to be safe from their evil, they should instead do so to keep their own evil away from people. As the former attitude can lead to pride, where a person begins to believe they are righteous while all others are sinful. It is important to remember that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take someone to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Reducing socializing with people can lead to great good as it reduces the chances of a muslim committing sins through their speech and actions. It prevents one from facing many arguments, difficulties and problems, which are mainly caused by socializing unnecessarily. It will free their time up to concentrate more on their duties and responsibilities. It gives them more time to learn and act on Islamic knowledge, which leads to true and lasting success in both worlds. Benefits might be obtained by interacting with people but in this day and age, it is far safer to avoid socializing unnecessarily.

Socializing - 45

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid, a muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way, which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on muslims, as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness in both worlds. In addition, peace of mind is removed when one adopts the habit of holding onto every little issue that annoyed them. Therefore, learning to overlook and pardon others aids one in letting go of petty issues, which in turn, helps them to achieve peace of mind.

Finally, the main Hadith does not mean one should not defend themselves when others cross the line, as Islam teaches humility without weakness. In addition, even when one pardons others, it does not mean they should blindly trust them or continue socialising with them as usual. This only increases the chances of them being wronged again. One should forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they must fulfill the rights of others, according to the teachings of Islam, and tread cautiously when dealing with the people who have wronged them in the past. This will ensure history does not repeat itself and they gain blessings and reward in both worlds.

Socializing - 46

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4860, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned people against speaking negatively about others, as this causes ill feelings towards them in the hearts of people.

It is often observed that families, especially from the Asian community, become broken over time. This is one the biggest complaints of family members, such as parents. They wonder why their children have become separated even though they were once firmly together.

One of the main reasons the relationships between relatives become fractured is because someone has spoken negatively about a person's relative to them. This is often done by a family member. For example, a mother will speak negatively about her son to her other child. This leads to enmity between the two relatives and over time it builds up and creates a wedge between the two. Those who were once like one person become like strangers to one another.

It is important to understand that people are not Angels. Except for a very few, when a negative thing is said to a person about another, they will get affected by it, even if they do not desire this to occur. This enmity still occurs even if the initial person who spoke negatively about someone's relative does not intend to create a wedge between relatives. Some often act in this way out of habit and are not trying to damage

relationships. For example, parents often adopt this habit and there is no doubt they do not desire the relationships of their children to become fractured or broken.

This attitude has such a serious impact on people's mentality that it also affects relatives that very rarely see or converse with each other. For example, a person will mention negative things about a person's relative to them, even though their relative may not even live in the same country as them. This behaviour implants enmity within their heart and with the passing of time they will find that they dislike their distant relative, even though they barely know them.

This issue often occurs when two people discuss negative things about others in front of other people. For example, parents may discuss negative things about their relatives in front of their children. Even though, they are not telling their children directly, none the less it still affects their hearts. If one truly reflected for a moment they will realise that the majority of the ill feelings they have towards others were not caused by what that person did or said to them directly. In most cases, it occurred because of a third party, who mentioned something negative about that person to them.

In cases where one is trying to warn another of some danger, then it is perfectly acceptable to mention another person in a negative way. If one is trying to teach another person a lesson, they should follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and mention the negative thing without naming the person. An example of this beautiful mentality is discussed in a Hadith found in

Sahih Bukhari, number 6979. Mentioning a negative thing without naming the person is good enough to teach someone a lesson.

To conclude, muslims should ponder deeply before speaking negatively about their relatives or others, privately or publicly. Otherwise, they may well find, as time passes on, their family and friends become separated and emotionally distant from one another.

The one who hears negative things about others must warn the speaker to desist from backbiting and explain the consequences of their actions to them. They must avoid focusing on the negative things said about a person and instead remember that one negative characteristic does not define a person's entire character. They must continue to show good character towards the person they heard negative things about and fulfill their rights according to the teachings of Islam. Simply put, one should treat people in a way they desire to be treated by others. Behaving in this manner will minimize the negative effects on one's heart caused by those who speak negatively about others.

Socializing - 47

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran, as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

A muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

“And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].”

Harshness only repels people from Islam and causes others to believe it is a harsh and crude religion. Misrepresenting Islam in this manner is a serious offence which all Muslims must avoid.

Therefore, a muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

It is important to note that the main Hadith does not mean one should not defend themselves when others cross the line, as Islam teaches humility without weakness. But it teaches Muslims to generally adopt

gentleness as their way without allowing others to take advantage of them.

Finally, one must always remember a simple Islamic philosophy, how one treats others is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. If one shows harshness in their speech and actions towards others, then they will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, if they treat others with gentleness, by making things easy for others, aiding others in good things and overlooking the mistakes and faults of others, then they will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted.

Socializing - 48

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1964, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a believer and an evil person.

A true believer can be considered naive, as they always interpret the words and actions of others in a positive way, instead of always thinking bad about others. They do not give a final judgement regarding others, knowing people can change for the better and they treat people how they desire others to treat them. Loving for others what one loves for themselves is in fact the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. They prove this through their actions by supporting others according to their means such as, financial and emotional support. They adopt a simple and straight forward mindset whereby they treat others in an upfront and clear manner. Meaning, they avoid all the negative characteristics associated with trickery, such as being two-faced.

This Hadith describes a believer as noble as they act with good character in both public and in private. Meaning, they show good character in respect to Allah, the Exalted, by having a sincere intention and practically by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This ensures they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They also fulfill the other aspect of faith which is to show good character to people by treating them according to the teachings of Islam, which includes fulfilling the rights of

others, such as their dependents. Their nobility encompasses all aspects of their intention, speech and actions, as real nobility is linked to conduct, not to worldly possessions or social status.

On the other hand an evil person behaves in an opposite way to these characteristics. Specifically, they are deceitful and treacherous in respect to the rights they owe Allah, the Exalted, and people. They demand their rights in full but fail to fulfill the rights of others. They strive to fulfill their desires by any means necessary, including unlawful means, and do not care who they wrong in the process. They misuse the blessings they have been granted thereby harming themselves and others. They falsely believe nobility lies with social status and wealth and as a result, they strive to gain these things at all costs, even if they have to compromise on their faith. Whatever they gain becomes a curse for them in both worlds and they never win the real respect and love of people. Any outward form of respect or love shown to them is fake and rooted in ulterior motives, something they are well aware of, even though they are afraid to admit it.

To conclude, it is important for Muslims not to only rely on their declaration of faith but also strive to adopt the noble characteristics discussed in Islam, as one requires practical righteous actions and conduct in order to support their verbal claim to faith so that they succeed in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Socializing - 49

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3775, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised two people not to converse in private if there is a third person present, as this could make them feel uncomfortable.

As Islam promotes unity, even the small actions which can potentially damage relationships between people has been warned against. It is important to note, that this Hadith also includes conversing in a language the third person does not understand. A muslim's duty is to always make others feel comfortable and this is one of the reasons muslims have been advised to spread the Islamic greeting of peace to people they know or do not know. Conversing in private in this manner contradicts this duty as it can make others feel uncomfortable. Only in emergencies should two people converse secretly in the presence of a third person otherwise, they should wait until either the third person leaves or another joins the group so that the third person does not feel left out.

A muslim should implement this teaching namely, making others feel comfortable, in all aspects and situations of their life, as long as it does not lead to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. An aspect of this is to treat people in a way one would like to be treated by others. They should avoid embarrassing others in public and therefore privately and gently command good and forbid evil. They should adopt a welcoming demeanor so that others feel comfortable around them. One should strive to fulfil the needs of others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, according to their means, as unfulfilled needs would make people feel uncomfortable.

Socializing - 50

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2018, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned the types of people he dislikes and will therefore be furthest from him on Judgment Day.

The first type is the one who talks excessively. This is disliked as the one who talks excessively is much more likely to utter vain and useless words which may not be sinful but often lead to sins. In addition, vain speech only wastes time which will be a great regret for the speaker on Judgment Day. And the one who excessively talks is more likely to commit physical sins. A muslim should remember that it only takes a single evil word to cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. The one who talks excessively will also find that they fall into more arguments, debates and problems with others. All of these things often lead to other sins, such as severing ties with other people. The one who talks excessively often fails to think things through appropriately and as a result they will make rash and incorrect judgements. This will only lead to stress in both worlds for them.

The next type of person mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the loud-mouthed who speaks excessively and artificially in order to boast and show-off through their speech. This person desires to show others how much knowledge they possess thereby attracting attention to themselves. This person will often intend to please people through their actions instead of Allah, the Exalted. This will result in them losing reward for their righteous actions. In fact, they will be told on Judgment

Day to gain their reward from those who they acted for. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

The final person mentioned in the main Hadith is the proud person. This is an evil and foolish mentality as an atom's worth of pride will lead one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. How can one be proud of anything they possess when the Creator and real Owner is none other than Allah, the Exalted? This is as foolish as the one who boasts about someone else's property and possession. Pride only encourages one to reject the truth when it comes from others and causes one to look down at others. The truth must be accepted, irrespective of who it comes from, as the source of truth is none other than Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, rejecting the truth is like rejecting the word of Allah, the Exalted. Looking down at others is foolish as no one knows the real value and status of a person in this world or the next except Allah, the Exalted. The one who thinks they are pious may well be insignificant in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted, and they may well die without their belief, as no one is guaranteed to leave this world with their faith. Remembering this should prevent one from adopting pride.

Socializing - 51

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2662, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against over praising others.

This is a disliked deed as it firstly can be sinful if the praise is based on falsehood, which often occurs when one over praises others. Even if it is true, over praising people, especially the ignorant, can cause them to become proud. This is an evil characteristic, as an atom's worth of it is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Over praising can even cause the praised person to believe they have fulfilled their potential in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and therefore do not need to strive harder in His obedience.

A muslim should not be fooled by the praise of others as they know their actions and inner hidden character better than any other person. Reflecting on this and the countless times Allah, the Exalted, has concealed their faults from people should prevent them from becoming proud. The truth is, if others knew all the hidden faults and sins of others, no one would praise another. In addition, they should remember that the praised quality they possess was granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, therefore all praise belongs to Him. Finally, a muslim should become more grateful to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they possess in ways pleasing to Him. One should advise others about this Hadith and warn them not to over praise others.

Only in certain cases is praising others acceptable. One must avoid over praising, always adhere to the truth and it should be done in order to encourage them to do more good. This especially applies to children such as, praising them in respect to their school work, good behaviour and when they fulfill the duties of Islam.

Socializing - 52

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1959, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that private conversations are a trust which must be protected.

Unfortunately, many have the bad habit of divulging the private conversations of people to others. This is an incredibly bad characteristic to possess as it contradicts the attitude of a true muslim. Many do this with their close relatives believing it is acceptable, when it is clearly not. A muslim should always keep the words spoken in a conversation secret unless they are fully sure the person they conversed with would not mind the information being mentioned to a third party. If they would, then doing this betrays them and this contradicts being sincere to them. Being sincere to others has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. But it is important to note, even if someone believes the another person would not mind their conversation being divulged to others, nonetheless, it is safer and superior to still refrain from sharing the conversation with a third party.

It is important to act on the main Hadith as it prevents sins, such as backbiting and gossiping, and prevents negative feelings being developed between people. This often occurs as conversations divulged to a third party often leads to misinterpretation and misunderstandings. These all only lead to fractured and broken relationships. If one honestly reflects on their life they will realize that the majority of the people they have felt negative feelings towards occurred because of what they were told about them not what they directly witnessed from them. Divulging private conversations prevents unity amongst people especially

relatives. And unity has been commanded in many teachings of Islam, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6065. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 58:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due...”

One should treat the words of others just like they desire people to treat their conversations.

Socializing - 53

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5130, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that love for something can make someone deaf and blind.

This means that loving something excessively can make someone blind and deaf to its defects and the negative effects it has on its lover, such as taking them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and is achieved when one fulfils His commands, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Hadith does not mean a muslim should not care for things but it means their love for something should never be excessive. This is when one's love takes them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is the benchmark. If one's love for something or someone prevents them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and instead encourages them to use them in vain or sinful ways, then it is bad for them, even if they do not realize it immediately. But if someone's love for something does not result in this then it shows their love is not unhealthy.

A muslim must prioritize the obedience and love of Allah, the Exalted, over all else, as this will allow them to put all their worldly things and relationships in their rightful place in their life and protect them from misusing the blessings they have been granted out of excessive love for something or someone else.

Excessive love causes one to adopt blind loyalty towards their beloved. This encourages one to support their beloved in every situation, even if they are wrong. This loyalty can even overcome the loyalty one must have towards Allah, the Exalted. This blind loyalty can also encourage one to break the ties they have with people in order to please their beloved, ties which Allah, the Exalted, has commanded to maintain. A person can become so blind and deaf that they begin to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of their beloved instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to insincerity towards Allah, the Exalted. Insincerity to Him leads to misguidance, as one becomes easily accessible to the Devil. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verses 39-40:

"[Iblees] said, 'My Lord, because You have put me in error, I will surely make [disobedience] attractive to them [i.e., mankind] on earth, and I will mislead them all. Except, among them, Your sincere servants.'"

A muslim should remember that no matter what they love, a day will certainly come when they will depart from it or their feelings towards it will change, as love is a fickle thing. The only exception is the true love of Allah, the Exalted, which will only strengthen with the passing of time and grow stronger after death.

Socializing - 54

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4918, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that believers are like mirrors to each other.

This means that the same way a person uses a mirror in order to remove any outward defects on themselves, they should strive to aid others by sincerely advising them so that they can remove any outer and inner defects from their characters. The same way a muslim would dislike to leave an outward defect on their body after observing it in a mirror, they should equally dislike observing a defect in another muslim without sincerely trying to remove it through sincere advice. Those who ignore the defects of their companions are not true friends, as a true friend would always desire to make the life of their companion better in this world and the next. This is only possible through the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Any person who does not desire nor strive to bring their companion closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is not a good friend and they have failed to fulfill the duty mentioned in this Hadith. Unfortunately, society has convinced many Muslims that a good friend involves supporting their friend in every situation, even if they are wrong and to only say the things which please them. Even though making others feel better does not contradict Islamic teachings, as long as lies are avoided, none the less, a good friend will always gently point out the truth to their friend, even if this upsets them, as they do not desire their friend to be misguided in both worldly or religious matters.

It is important to emphasize, sincere advice must be offered in a kind and gentle way as people often push others further away from improving by advising them in a harsh manner. In addition, it should be done in private to avoid the other person's embarrassment and according to Islamic teachings, as advice from an ignorant person very rarely leads to a good outcome.

This Hadith also indicates the importance of leading by example, as one's friends are likely to pick up the habits of their friend. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. Therefore, one must ensure they strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they remain rightly guided themselves and influence their friends in a positive way. This is the only friendship which will truly benefit one in both worlds. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

Just like a mirror represents a person's image, Muslims represent each other. Therefore, one must ensure they represent the Muslim community in a positive way as this is one of the duties of a Muslim. When one misbehaves thereby misrepresenting the Muslim community this only pushes non-Muslims and even other Muslims further away from the teachings of Islam. This misrepresentation is something which one will answer for in the court of Allah, the Exalted.

Finally, the main Hadith also indicates the importance of treating other Muslims in a sincere manner, especially when they face difficulties. They should see the hardship of others as they own hardship, they should see the stress of others as their own stress and therefore strive hard to aid others according to their means, such as emotional, physical and financial help. This will ensure they receive the continuous support of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed by a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853.

Socializing - 55

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever protects the honor of another Muslim will be protected from Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

Just like a muslim would desire others to protect their honor in their presence or absence, they should protect the honor of others in their presence or absence also. In fact, loving for others what one desires for themselves is the characteristic of a true believer, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. A muslim should protect the honor of others when anyone else speaks ill about them, such as backbiting or slander, irrespective of if what they are saying is true or not. This is an aspect of concealing the faults of others and leads to Allah, the Exalted, concealing their faults in both worlds. This is advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. Behaving in such a manner is a clear proof of one's love for others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is a characteristic which leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2688.

The main Hadith under discussion clearly shows that a muslim benefits from supporting others, so even if they are too preoccupied from caring about others they should at least act in this manner for their own sake. This reality applies to all good deeds, such as charity. One only benefits themselves through the reward they gain when they perform good deeds. Allah, the Exalted, has no need for anyone to obey Him and the needy will be provided for, one way or another. Allah, the Exalted, only gives opportunities to people to gain reward by helping others.

In addition, the one who fails to defend the honor of others when they have the opportunity and strength to do so, without fear of harm, should fear that Allah, the Exalted, will not protect their honor in a time and place where it is being violated by others and especially, on the Day of Resurrection.

Finally, as the main Hadith under discussion advises protecting the honor of others, it indirectly indicates the importance of not violating the honor of others. This is in fact the very sign of a true muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Specifically, it advises that a true muslim and believer keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others.

Socializing - 56

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1601, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who consoles a grief stricken person will be clothed with a garment of honor on Judgment Day.

As facing difficulties are guaranteed for all, this is an extremely simple way of obtaining a great reward which does not require much time, energy or money. This includes striving to aid the family facing a difficulty according to one's means, such as emotional, financial and physical support. A muslim must gently encourage those facing difficulties to remain patient throughout the ordeal and remind them of the verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the importance and great reward of being patient. They should speak positively by reminding them that things only occur for a good reason, even if people fail to understand the wisdom behind them. In reality, a person does not need to be a scholar to perform this righteous deed, as in most cases a few kind words of support are enough to make someone facing difficulties feel better. And in some cases just physically being there is enough to provide them with the feeling of support even if no words are spoken.

This attitude is easily adopted when one simply treats others how they desire to be treated by people.

Finally, it is important muslims correct their intention when performing this righteous deed meaning, do it for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not do it in order to show off to others, such as their relatives, nor do it out of fear of being criticized by others if they fail to do it. Those who act for the sake of others will be told on Judgment Day to gain their reward from those they acted for which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Socializing - 57

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6032, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the worse people on the Day of Judgment are those who are avoided because of their evil behaviour.

This is the one who possesses bad character especially, towards people. They negatively affect others through their speech, such as using vulgar language, and harm them through their actions, such as physical violence and intimidation. As good character will be the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, one can judge how significant bad character will be. Evil behaviour completely contradicts the characteristic of a true muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. It advises that a true muslim and believer keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others.

A muslim should understand the importance of fulfilling both aspects of faith. The first is to show good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn leads to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The other aspect of faith is to show good character to others by practically loving for others what one loves for themselves. This is a characteristic of a true believer, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This undoubtedly includes treating others kindly, just like one would like people to treat them with kindness and respect.

Finally, a muslim must always avoid wronging others, through their speech or actions. Justice will be established on Judgement Day whereby an oppressor will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, the oppressor will be given the sins of their victims. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

This makes it clear that evil behaviour leads to loneliness in this world, as no decent person desires to befriend such an evil person, and it leads to trouble and stress in both worlds.

Socializing - 58

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4992, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that speaking about everything one hears to others is enough to make them sinful.

It is important to note, one should firstly ensure they only listen to lawful speech, as actively participating in a conversation which involves sinful speech will negatively affect them in both worlds. A muslim should try to avoid conversations involving vain and useless speech, as this often leads to sinful speech and is a waste of one's precious time, which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day, especially when they observe the rewarded given to those who utilised their time correctly.

Secondly, they should ensure that they do not relate everything they hear to others, as this can easily lead to backbiting and slandering, which are major sins. It also often leads to fractured and broken relationships, especially amongst relatives, as negative feelings are generated in the hearts of people when they hear things that were not intended for them. A muslim should only relate things they hear if they can avoid sins and if the information is beneficial to others. In addition, the information they pass on must be verified and authentic, as conveying things which are not verified contradicts the command of the Holy Quran. A muslim who intends to benefit people may well harm them by acting in this manner. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”

One must instead control their speech so that they only speak good or remain silent, as vain and sinful speech only leads to stress and trouble in both worlds.

One must adopt good company in order to avoid listening to vain or sinful speech. This would also prevent them from passing on vain or sinful speech to a third party.

To conclude, just like a muslim would not like most of the things they discuss to be spread to others, they should not treat what others say in this manner either.

Socializing - 59

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 12, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a good quality found within Islam. Namely, to spread the Islamic greeting of peace to people one knows and to those they do not know.

It is important to act on this good characteristic as nowadays muslims often only spread the Islamic greeting of peace to those they know. It is important to spread it to all, as this leads to love between people and strengthens Islam. In fact, this characteristic leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 194. One must avoid the bad habit of only shaking hands with other Muslims without extending the Islamic greeting of peace to them. The verbal greeting of peace is more important than only shaking hands.

A muslim should never forget that they will receive a minimum of ten rewards for every greeting of peace they extend to others, even if others fail to reply to them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5195.

Finally, a muslim should fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace correctly by demonstrating this peace in their other speech and actions towards others by keeping their verbal and physical harm away from people and their possessions. This is in fact, the definition of a true muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. It

is hypocritical for someone to extend the greeting of peace to someone and then harm them through their speech and actions. In fact this attitude defies the purpose of extending the greeting of peace to others.

Socializing - 60

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 67, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the blood, property and honor of a muslim are sacred in Islam.

This Hadith, like many others, teaches muslims that success can only be obtained when one fulfills the rights of Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, and the rights of people. One without the other is not good enough. Justice will be established on Judgement Day whereby an oppressor will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, the oppressor will be given the sins of their victims. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

A true believer and muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Therefore, it is vital for muslims not to harm others through their actions or words.

A muslim must respect the possessions of others and not try to wrongfully acquire them, for example, in a legal case. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353, warns that someone who does this will go to Hell, even if the thing they acquired was as insignificant as a twig of a tree. Muslims should only use the possessions of others according to

their wishes and return them in a way pleasing to its owner. One should treat the possessions of others in a way they want people to treat their own possessions.

The honor of a muslim should not be violated through actions or speech, such as backbiting or slander. A muslim should instead defend the honor of others, whether in their presence or absence, as this will lead to their protection from the fire of Hell. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931. One should only speak about others in a way they wish others to speak about them. One should therefore speak good or remain silent.

To conclude, one should avoid wronging the self, possessions or honor of others by treating others exactly how they desire others to treat them. Just like one loves this for themselves, they should love it for others and prove this through their actions and speech. This is the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

Socializing - 61

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thoughts and feelings, it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person, which is undoubtedly a sin. The worst kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and instead strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The

second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them. They should continue to fulfill the rights of the person they envy, according to the teachings of Islam. They should learn and act on Islamic knowledge in order to understand that Allah, the Exalted, grants the best thing to each person and if a particular worldly blessing has not been granted to them it means that it is better for them not to have it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess. A Muslim must dislike sins but not the person, as a person can always repent to Allah, the Exalted. They must show their dislike of sins within the boundaries of Islam. They should gently advise others against bad things, as being harsh often pushes further away from turning back to Allah, the Exalted.

Another point must be made on this topic. A muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars, a muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to

support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a muslim to sever ties with another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a muslim should continue to advise the other muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so, as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a muslim should fulfil the following rights of other muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other muslims, have over them, as each person will be asked whether they

fulfilled the rights of other people on Judgement Day. One must treat others in a way they wish to be treated by people.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others. And pride encourages one to reject the truth when it is presented to them, as it did not come from them and contradicts their desires.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing Islamic clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from

His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This ensures one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a muslim to hate another muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then, a muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam, as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A muslim must not violate any of these rights. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings

be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true muslim until they protect other people, including non-muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not, justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary, the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

Socializing - 62

In a long Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the foundation of good is controlling one's tongue. This makes it clear that restraining the tongue, guarding it and keeping it within the limits set by Islam is the source of all good. Therefore, whoever keeps control of their tongue has taken control of their affair. In fact, this Hadith concludes by declaring that speech is the main cause for people entering Hell. This is supported by many other Hadiths, such as the one found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314, which warns that it only takes one evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day. This is because the majority of the major sins have an element of speech in them and in most cases it is much easier to sin through one's words than their actions. When a muslim corrects their speech, all their actions will become correct but if they fail to do this then they will only destroy their good deeds through their evil speech. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verses 70-71:

"O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice. He will [then] amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins..."

A Muslim must therefore avoid vain speech, as it is a waste of time and will therefore be a great regret for them on Judgement Day. Vain speech is also the main cause of most of the arguments, problems and difficulties a person faces in this world. Vain speech is also often the first step before evil speech, such as lying, backbiting and slander. One must also avoid all forms of evil speech, as it leads to trouble in both worlds.

To conclude, a muslim must act on the far reaching advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176, namely, they should either speak good words or remain silent.

Socializing - 63

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over something which all Muslims hope for. They all hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

Socializing - 64

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the bad characteristic of stubbornness and its negative effects on the one who possesses it and those around them. Even though this characteristic can lead to many problems only a major one will be discussed. Some adopt stubbornness in worldly matters and as a result they do not change their character for the better. Instead, they remain steadfast on their attitude believing this is somehow a sign of their great strength and wisdom. Steadfastness in matters of faith is a praiseworthy attitude but in most worldly matters it is only called stubbornness, which is blameworthy.

Unfortunately, some believe if they change their attitude it demonstrates weakness or it shows that they are admitting their fault and because of this they stubbornly fail to change for the better. Adults behave like immature children by believing that if they change their behaviour it means they have lost while others who remain steadfast on their attitude have won. This is simply childish.

In reality, an intelligent person will remain steadfast on matters of faith but in worldly matters they will change their attitude, as long as it is not sinful, in order to make their life easier. So changing to improve one's life is not a sign of weakness it is in fact a sign of intelligence.

In many cases, a person refuses to change their attitude and expects others in their life to change theirs, such as their relatives. But what often

occurs is that due to stubbornness all remain in the same state which only leads to regular disagreements and arguments. A wise person understands that if the people around them do not change for the better than they should. This change will improve the quality of their life and their relationship with others which is much better than going around in circular arguments with people. This positive attitude will eventually cause others to respect them as it takes real strength to change one's character for the better.

Those who remain stubborn will always find something to be annoyed about which will remove peace from their life. This will cause further difficulties in all aspects of their life, such as their mental health. But those who adapt and change for the better will always move from one station of peace to another. If one achieves this peace does it really matter if others believe they only changed because they were wrong?

To conclude, to remain steadfast on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is praiseworthy. But in worldly matters and in cases where no sin is committed a person should learn to adapt and change their attitude so that they find some peace in this world.

Socializing - 65

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over how some people become overly sad when they are criticised. A Muslim should always remember that there are two types of people. The first are rightly guided as their criticism of others is based on the criticism and advice found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This type will always be constructive and guide one to blessings and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These people will also refrain from over or under praising others. Over praising others can cause them to become proud and arrogant. Under praising others can lead them to becoming lazy and put them off from doing good. This reaction is often observed in children. Praising according to the teachings of Islam will inspire others to strive harder in both worldly and religious matters and it will prevent them from becoming arrogant. Therefore, the praise and constructive criticism of this person should be accepted and acted upon even if comes from a stranger.

The second type of person criticises based on their own desires. This criticism is mostly unconstructive and only shows one's bad mood and attitude. These people often over and under praise others as they act based on their own desires. The negative effects of these two were mentioned earlier. Therefore, the criticism and praise of this person should be ignored in the majority of cases even if it comes from a loved one as it will only cause one to become unnecessarily sad in cases of criticism and arrogant in cases of praise.

It is important to remember that a person who over praises others will often over criticise them too. The rule one should always follow is that they should only accept the criticism and praise based on the teachings of Islam. All other things should be ignored and not taken personally.

Socializing - 66

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering about a certain mentality which some Muslims have adopted. It is when a person tells many people about their problems. The issue with this attitude is that when one tells too many people then sharing their problems and seeking advice becomes a means of complaining about their difficulties which is a clear sign of their impatience. In addition, this attitude will only cause one to become confused as the advice they receive will be varied which will cause them to become more and more uncertain of the correct path. Whereas, consulting a few wise people will only cause one's certainty to increase. Repeating one's problems over and over again to many people also causes them to focus too much on their problem which makes it appear bigger and more significant than it really is, even to the point that it causes them to neglect their other duties which only leads to more impatience.

Therefore Muslims, should only consult a few people in respect to their difficulties. They should select these few people according to the advice of the Holy Quran. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 43:

“...So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”

This verse reminds Muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical

health a Muslim should only share their problems with those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only share their problems with those who fear Allah, the Exalted. This is because they will never advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, those who do not fear or obey Allah, the Exalted, might possess knowledge and experience but they will easily advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, which only increases one's problems. In reality, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, possess true knowledge and only this knowledge will guide others through their problems successfully. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”

Socializing - 67

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important to note that one should react correctly whenever their advice is not acted upon. When the person seeking advice chooses an unlawful decision which contradicts the advice given to them the advisor should show dislike towards their choice as this is a branch of faith. In fact, disliking something for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then they must stay within the limits of Islam when showing their dislike.

If the choices are between two lawful options and their advice is not acted upon then they should not become annoyed at the one seeking advice as they chose a lawful choice. They should instead respect their decision and not harbour any ill feelings for them nor outwardly show any signs of annoyance, such as telling them they told them so if their decision does not work out for them. People are not Angels they will make mistakes so it is best to be kind to others even if they reject advice. One should instead hope for reward by fulfilling their duty from Allah, the Exalted, by giving good and sincere advice to another.

In addition, the one seeking advice should not ask for advice if they have already made their mind up before hand as this only opens the door for a potential argument if they seek someone's advice only to reject it as it contradicts their pre-determined choice.

Socializing - 68

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the behaviour of some who always strive to extract their full rights and more from others. In this day and age due to ignorance it has become more difficult to fulfil the rights of people, such as one's parents. Even though a Muslim has no excuse but to strive to fulfil them it is important for Muslims to be merciful with each other. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6655, Allah, the Exalted, shows mercy to those who are merciful to others.

One aspect of this mercy is for a Muslim not to demand their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means such as their physical or financial strength to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, when a Muslim demands their full rights from others and they fail to fulfil them it may lead to their punishment. In order to be merciful to others they should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a Muslim should not strive to fulfil the rights of others but it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves if they possess the means to do so without troubling themselves, especially if their child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next.

Socializing - 69

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering about the important duty on all Muslims to command good and forbid evil. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah...”

Even though, this is an important duty on each Muslim yet they will encounter people who do not seem to listen nor act on the advice given to them. This is quite obvious especially in this day and age. In cases like this it is best not to give up but to consider changing one's technique. Advising others through words is one way of commanding good and forbidding evil but a better way is to advise others through one's actions. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the greatest teacher as he advised others through his words and actions. This leading by example technique is important to adopt as it is more likely to affect others in a positive way. But those who still fail to accept this technique of commanding good and forbidding evil should be left alone. One should continue showing a practical example but perhaps take a step back from verbally advising them as continuously advising others who do not pay attention can cause both parties to become irritated and angered. This contradicts the very attitude a Muslim should possess when they advise others towards good. It is a sad truth that one should not bother verbally imposing themselves on people who do not care what they have to say. But they should continue advising others through their actions. In this way one not only helps themselves by refining their own character but also fulfils

their duty in commanding good and forbidding evil. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 17:

“...enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.”

Socializing - 70

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the Muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet Muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the Muslim nation has only decreased as the number of Muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands Muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many Muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many Muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many Muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

Socializing - 71

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the things which prevent a person from changing for the better. Unfortunately, some people experience tests and times of ease yet, do not change their character in a positive way. Even though, there are many possible causes only one will be discussed in this chapter.

In some cases, people do not change for the better because the people around them do not encourage them to do so. In fact, many people have this habit of only patting others on the back and telling them what they want to hear. They somehow believe this is the character of a good companion and friend. They falsely believe acting in this way is a sign of their deep love and respect for others. But this is completely incorrect as this behaviour only encourages one to continue with their attitude without improving it. There is nothing wrong with providing emotional comfort to others but a good friend will always kindly point out the ways in which their friend or relative can improve their character. This will in fact improve the quality and condition of their companion's life in this world and in the next. While merely patting others on the back will only provide temporary comfort to them but in no way will it improve the situation or their character. The correct attitude is possible to achieve without disrespecting others. This is the duty of a person towards others especially, their relatives. In reality, if a person's friend or relative dislikes their good advice then they do not value their relationship with them. A person should never let anything, such as a person's age, prevent them from speaking the truth and kindly advising them to change their attitude for the better. Even if it is one's own parents they should still fulfil this duty as this behaviour is the essence of treating them kindly. Simply staying quiet just because they are one's parents should not be the attitude of a person unless they know advising them will only lead to further problems for everyone.

A shoulder to cry on is only really useful when it leads to a person changing for the better. Even if a person's attitude in a particular situation is correct none the less there are always lessons they can learn from the situation, which should be pointed out to them by others.

To conclude, one must advise others to do good and turn away from evil and not only provide emotional support by simply patting others on the back. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."

Socializing - 72

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a thing which people generally complain about, especially parents. During a person's youth due to a lack of responsibilities and sharing a common daily schedule, such as attending the same school, people form strong and close bonds with others, such as siblings or friends. But with the passing of time as the responsibilities of people increase and differ and due to changes in their daily schedule people adopt different characteristics. This causes the bonds between them to weaken and in some cases they become quite distant from one another.

This is often observed in homes which have many siblings or amongst friends. It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, created each person with their own unique path in life, which is different from others. This is a sign of His infinite power. Billions of people yet, no two paths are the same. The differences in these paths are the main cause why people drift apart from each other. Best friends become friends only by name. Close siblings become emotionally distant from one another. This is a part of destiny and is truly inevitable. It is important to understand this point as some people can become ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted, because of it. They dislike the changes in their lives which lead to the changes in their relationships with others. But these changes in their lives are something Allah, the Exalted, chose so disliking them is disliking the choice of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should instead see things in a positive way. Meaning, they should have hope that one day in the hereafter the strong fellowship they once shared with someone will once again be forged but to a much higher and unbreakable level. This hope should inspire a Muslim to be more obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience knowing that this outcome will only be granted to His obedient servants. In addition, it will cause a Muslim to desire and

supplicate for their companion to also strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. They will also be rewarded for acting on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. So adopting this mentality will help a Muslim to avoid ingratitude, strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and gain more reward all the while hoping they will once again be blessed with a strong bond they once shared with their companion. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 47:

“And We will remove whatever is in their breasts of resentment, [so they will be] brothers, on thrones facing each other.”

Socializing - 73

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a strange attitude many people have adopted. When they are questioned about things they are unaware of instead of admitting the truth they give a reply which has little or no foundation in the truth. This can become a serious issue especially in matters connected to Islam. A Muslim may get punished for giving incorrect information which others act on. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. This is because they ignorantly attributed things to Allah, the Exalted, or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of these people strange beliefs and customs have become attached to Islam which is a great deviation from the truth brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, many of the cultural customs Muslims have adopted believing them to be a part of Islam occurred because of this ignorant mentality.

These people believe that if they simply admit they do not know something they will appear foolish to others. This mentality in itself is extremely foolish as the righteous predecessors would stress the importance of admitting one's ignorance so that others do not become misguided. In fact, the righteous predecessors would only count the person who behaved in this manner as an intelligent person and counted the one who answered every question posed to them a fool.

This attitude is often observed in elders who often advise their children on issues relating to the world and religion instead of admitting their ignorance and directing them to someone who knows the truth. When elders act in this way they fail their duty in rightly guiding their

dependents which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore, gain correct knowledge, whether worldly or religious, before advising others and in cases they are unaware of something they should admit it as this will not reduce their rank in anyway. If anything Allah, the Exalted, and people will appreciate their honesty.

Socializing - 74

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of Muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a Muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for Muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a Muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

“So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”

The Muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all Muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause Muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, Muslims should remain firm in commanding good

and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

Socializing - 75

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to offer advice correctly and sincerely as this is an aspect of Islam according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. In lawful matters an aspect of this is that a Muslim should give advice based on the character of the one seeking the advice instead of basing it on their own character. This is in fact a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who gave different advice when questioned about the same thing from different people. This is important as people are different and what one person finds bearable another might not so it is best to give advice based on the questioner's character. This attitude will reduce the chances of one giving a biased opinion which is tailored to their own character and way of life.

In addition, in lawful matters in most cases it is best not to directly advise people what to do instead they should be advised and aided in putting together a list of pros and cons to each possible choice and then make an informed decision based on this list. This will most likely lead to a better and satisfactory outcome and it prevents a person blaming their advisor in the future as they did not advise them directly by telling them to choose a specific option.

Finally, a person should never be ashamed of admitting they are unsure about a matter and should advise others to seek advice from someone more qualified if necessary.

Socializing - 76

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

Socializing - 77

It is important for muslims, especially in this day and age, to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who muslims should pay attention to, as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong, they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored, as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this, as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

Socializing - 78

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the reaction of many countries to the Corona Virus outbreak and their attempt at reducing its spread.

It is important for muslims to fulfill the command of Allah, the Exalted, in the chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you...”

It is vital for muslims to obey the government during all matters which do not contradict the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, in those matters which are beneficial to the general public. Muslims should follow the advice and commands given by their government and not cause further problems for society and Islam by ignoring them.

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204, that

religion is being sincere to others, which includes those in authority. This means muslims must support them in matters which are beneficial and protects the society from harm, such as the social restrictions which have been imposed by governments.

Finally, this Hadith also mentions being sincere towards the general public. This applies to all members of the society irrespective of their faith or if one personally knows them or not. Even though, a muslim or their loved ones may not be at risk of serious harm by being infected with the Corona Virus there are people in society which are at serious risk of harm and death. In order to be sincere to these people, a muslim must obey the restrictions imposed by the government, as these restrictions aim to protect them and prevent the spread of the virus.

A muslim's duty is to support their political and religious leaders in anything which is praiseworthy in the eyes of Islam, such as the things which benefit the society. As indicated by the verse quoted earlier, this is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Socializing - 79

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the good things a famous person who passed away did and those who praised them. It is important for muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themselves. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered. The one who is kind to people is often aided by others in their time of need. Simply put, how one treats others is how they are treated by people.

In addition, the people will supplicate for them after they pass away which is definitely answered, as it has been recorded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

"...saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith..."

Finally, a person who treated others kindly will gain their intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a day people will be desperate for the intercession of others. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7439.

But those who mistreat others, even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to, then the oppressor's good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim's sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Therefore, a muslim should be kind to themselves by being kind to others, as in reality, this leads to their own benefit in both worlds. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself...”

Socializing - 80

I read a news article, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how one can avoid arguments and instead discuss things in a mature way. It is important to understand that the characteristic of a true muslim is not to argue or debate with others in order to promote themselves and their opinion. They should instead present the information in order to promote the truth. This applies to both worldly and religious matters. The one who aims to promote the truth will not argue. Only the one who is trying to promote themselves will. Contrary to what many believe, winning arguments does not increase one's rank in any way. The only time a person's rank in both worlds increases is when one avoids arguing and instead presents the truth or accepts it when it is presented to them. A muslim should avoid going back and forth with others when discussing things, as this is a characteristic of arguing. It is important to avoid arguing as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, promised a home in the middle of Paradise for the one who gives up arguing, even when they are correct. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1993. It is this correct mentality which has been indicated in chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 125:

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best...”

A muslim should understand that their duty is not to force people to accept something. Their duty is to simply present the truth, as being forceful is a characteristic of arguing. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

“So remind, you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”

To conclude, presenting the truth and accepting it without arguing will improve one's relationships with others and reduce one's stress.

Socializing - 81

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a prominent figure in society who decided to take a step back from the role which came with being a member of his family. It seemed as though he was forced to decide whether to be an active member and fulfil this role fully or to completely be cut off from it and his family.

Unfortunately, this type of attitude is extremely common amongst muslims, especially the Asian community. They often give extreme ultimatums to their relatives meaning, they are either with them or completely cut off from them. This contradicts the teachings of Islam, as they base their reaction on their own feelings and desires instead of the teachings of Islam. For example, if a son wants to marry someone who is lawful in Islam for him to marry but as the parents dislike his choice, they give him an ultimatum; he either chooses not to marry her or if he does, they will cut ties with him. This behaviour completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. It is strange how these people do not understand that they are the ones who will grieve over the outcome more than anyone else. And even if they claim to be completely pleased with cutting ties with their relative, it is undoubtedly a major sin. In fact, it is such a severe sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984, that the one who severs the ties of kinship will not enter Paradise. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, severs ties with the one who behaves in such a manner, which prevents them from being content with their incorrect decision. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987. A muslim should therefore only turn away from the decision of their relatives or friends if it is unlawful. If it is lawful but they disagree with their choice, they should kindly express their opinion but if the

person decides to go ahead with their choice, they should accept this and maintain ties with them and fulfil their rights according to the teachings of Islam. They should continue supporting them and never insult them if their choice ends up being a bad one. It is important to remember people are not perfect. This will ensure the relatives or friends continue maintaining ties and respecting each other. This is a duty all muslims must fulfil.

Socializing - 82

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It mentioned how some young adults from certain communities ran away from their homes for the sake of what they believed was true love.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain peace of mind and body in both worlds. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success, especially in respect to the next world, then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear

sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships, such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do, then it is a clear sign of their love for them. If they do not, then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

Socializing - 83

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how a person is affected by a friend. There are countless examples in the world of how a person inspired their friend to take the wrong path in life which caused them serious trouble, such as prison. One should not only be cautious of people who possess bad characteristics, as they will influence their friends in a negative way. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. But a muslim should also be cautious over the people who seem to possess genuine love for them, especially those who do not possess Islamic knowledge. This is because the one who does not possess Islamic knowledge will sometimes advise their loved ones incorrectly, believing they have fulfilled and shown their love to their companion. For example, a wife may advise her tired husband to offer his obligatory prayer at home instead of at the Mosque with congregation. Even though according to some scholars it is permissible to offer one's obligatory prayer at home yet, this advice will only take one away from one of the greatest traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn will only take them further away from Allah, the Exalted. This wife may believe she has behaved in a loving way, even though she has not. This is why gaining Islamic knowledge is extremely important and a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. This is because some things may seem difficult outwardly yet many blessings are contained within them. And many things may seem easy and even lawful yet they only take one away from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim should be cautious and remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not get fooled by the advice a loved one gives them. They should not assume the advice will benefit them just because it comes from a beloved companion. They must

instead compare this advice to the teachings of Islam and only act on it if Islam approves of it. If it does not approve of it, they must avoid acting on it and kindly advise their companion the right course of action, according to the teachings of Islam.

Socializing - 84

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a person who desired to pursue a specific lawful occupation and the difficulty she was receiving from others about her decision, especially from her relatives.

It is important to understand that generally when one chooses a path which is different from the path of others, such as their relatives and friends, they will face criticism and resistance from them. In fact, the majority of criticism comes from a person's relatives. For example, when a muslim decides to concentrate more on acting on the teachings of Islam and if it is something their family have not pursued themselves, then they will face criticism from them. They will be labelled foolish and extreme by those who they believed would support them on their path. It is important for muslims to remain steadfast on the lawful path they choose and trust in the help of Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to overcome these difficulties.

This is a common reaction from people, as when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them, yet they will still face criticism. It is the same

reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people, as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

To conclude, as long as one's path in life is lawful, they should remain steadfast and not be deterred by the criticism of others. But this does not mean they should not try to improve their situation and character. It means they should not be deterred from pursuing their lawful choice according to the teachings of Islam.

Socializing - 85

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on interacting in a positive way with colleagues at work in order to function as a team. It is important to understand that Islam does not demand muslims to completely get along with all people. As people have been created differently and possess different characteristics it is not possible to get along with everyone. Because of a difference of mentalities, people will always disagree with others who possess a differently mentality. The only person who may be able to achieve this is a two-faced person who changes their behaviour and attitude depending on who they are with. But even this person will eventually be exposed by Allah, the Exalted. Just because a person does not get along with others, it does not mean they dislike them. It only means they differ in their attitudes and behaviour. Just like a school child who is not friends with every child in their class. It does not mean they dislike those who they are not friends with.

Therefore, a muslim should not become sad if they do not get along with everyone, even their own relatives. But it is a duty on all muslims to treat all others with respect and fulfil the rights of each person, even if they do not get along with them, as this is an important characteristic of a muslim. This is what Islam commands and if one acts in this way with everyone, then they will find their interactions with people peaceful and beneficial in both worlds despite their differences.

Socializing - 86

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a great problem society is facing namely, the spread of fake news within society. One can imagine how difficult this is to control, especially in this time of social media. It is therefore important for muslims to act on the following verse of the Holy Quran and not spread information to others, even if they believe they are benefiting others by doing so, without verifying the information first. Meaning, they should ensure it comes from a reliable source and is accurate. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”

Even though, this verse indicates a wicked person spreading news, it can still apply to all people which share information with others. As mentioned in this verse, a person may believe they are helping others but by spreading unverified information they might harm others instead, such as emotional harm. Unfortunately, many muslims are heedless to this and have a habit of simply forwarding information through text messages and social media applications without verifying it. In cases where the information is connected to religious matters, it is even more important to verify the information before spreading it. As one may get punished for the actions of others based on the incorrect information they provided them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

In addition, with everything that is going on in the world and how it is affecting muslims, it is even more important to verify information, as warning others over things which did not happen only creates distress in society and furthers the rift between muslims and other communities. This contradicts Islamic teachings.

A muslim needs to understand that Allah, the Exalted, will not question why they did not share unverified information with others on Judgment Day. But He will certainly question them if they do share information with others, whether it is verified or not. Therefore, an intelligent muslim will only share verified information and anything which is not verified, they will leave, knowing they will not be held accountable for it.

Socializing - 87

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a mother who discussed how her son's behavior towards her changed after he got married. He neglected his mother and rarely contacted her after he moved away with his wife. But this mother learnt to live with what happened and claimed to understand that people come and go.

The important lesson to learn from this is that when a muslim is blessed with a relationship, such as a child or a sibling, they should understand the true purpose of that relationship and act accordingly. In each case, they should learn and fulfill their responsibilities towards them according to the teachings of Islam to the best of their ability. But more importantly do all this for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who has commanded them to fulfill the rights of the people in their lives. If one genuinely acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they will never expect nor demand anything from people. They will not overly rejoice when people do things for them, such as showing gratitude, nor will they grieve if they neglect them. As they fulfilled the rights of the person for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they only seek reward from Allah, the Exalted, not people. This would prevent a person becoming sad or depressed if their relative or friend neglected them after years of helping them. Unfortunately, many muslims form relationships with the wrong intention. They get married and have children for the sake of receiving something back from their spouse and children. In most cases, especially in this day and age, they will be left disappointed if they adopt this attitude. It is important for each muslim to correct their intention and connect with people and forge relationships for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore only seek benefit and reward

from Him. Whoever acts in this manner proves that they have put their trust in Allah, Exalted. The one who puts their trust in Allah, the Exalted, will not be let down in this world or the next. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”

Whoever adopts the incorrect intention and forms relationships for the sake of gaining a return from people have put their trust in people. And whoever relies and puts their trust in people will be let down, sooner or later. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 73:

“Weak (indeed) are the seeker and the sought!”

This discussion does not mean a muslim should not be grateful to others for what they have done for them, as this is a part of thanking Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954. But it means if someone does not appreciate a muslim for what they have done, they should not be bothered by it, as they should be hoping for a return and reward from Allah, the Exalted, not people.

Socializing - 88

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It mentioned the changes which have occurred over time within culture and society. If one studies the lives of the righteous predecessors they will observe many differences between them and the muslims of today. One big difference is the way people respond to those who command good and forbid evil, which is a duty on all muslims according to their knowledge. It is important for muslims to understand this behavioural change, as it can prevent many arguments and enmity growing between people. In the past muslims loved those who advised them to do good and warned them against bad things. In fact, they did not consider someone a sincere friend until they behaved in this manner with them. They actually even loved those who advised them on things which were not considered sins in Islam but were only disliked things. This is a major change which has occurred. Many muslims nowadays dislike being constructively criticized in this manner. In cases where unlawful things are occurring, it is a duty on a muslim to gently and kindly warn against it according to the teachings of Islam, even if others dislike their behaviour. But in most cases, where others are not committing a sin but are merely committing things which are disliked, it is better for a muslim not to criticize them over them, as it will only lead to enmity, arguments and it can even cause one to give up advising others because of the negative response they receive. The exception is when the one being advised likes being advised in such a manner. Therefore, a muslim who desires to fulfil their duty and avoid arguments with others, should command good and warn against the unlawful but leave aside things which do not fall within these two categories.

Socializing - 89

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the night-life culture found in different societies. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 701, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, disliked sleeping before performing the late evening obligatory prayer and disliked engaging in conversation after performing it.

Even though, it is not prohibited to sleep before the late evening obligatory prayer, it is far better and safer to offer it first, as sleeping before it could cause one to sleep pass its time. In addition, even if one manages to wake up, the laziness caused by sleep may prevent them from fully concentrating in it thereby, reducing their reward. Finally, it is best to offer it and all the rest of the obligatory prayers as soon as they happen, as this is one of the most beloved righteous deeds to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 612. And behaving in this manner is a sign of a true believer. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

“...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.”

Unfortunately, it has become a widely practiced custom, especially amongst Asian muslims, to hold worldly gatherings and conversations after

they have performed the obligatory late evening prayer. Even though, this is not prohibited yet it often leads to vain speech, which is a waste of time. This will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day, especially when they observe the reward given to those who utilized their resources correctly. It often leads to sins, such as gossiping, backbiting and slandering. And even if one is protected from this, staying up in the evening unnecessarily will only make them more tired, thereby making it harder for them to wake up and perform the obligatory dawn prayer correctly. This fatigue is often the reason why many muslims do not offer the obligatory dawn prayer at the Mosque with congregation. This fatigue can also prevent one from offering the night voluntary prayer, which is the best prayer after the obligatory prayers, according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614. And the voluntary night prayer is a firmly established tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Socializing - 90

Muslims must remain steadfast against their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways...”

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier

that possesses no weapons to defend themselves would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend themselves when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Socializing - 91

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2501, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that whoever is silent is saved.

This means the one who is silent from vain or evil speech and only speaks good words will be saved by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This is important to understand as the main reason people will enter Hell is because of their speech. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. In fact, it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

Speech can be of three types. The first is evil speech which should be avoided at all costs. The second is vain speech which only causes one to waste time which in turn, will lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. In addition, the first step of sinful speech is often vain speech. So it is safer to avoid this type of speech. The final type is good speech which should always be adopted. Based on these aspects, two thirds of speech should be removed from one's life.

In addition, the one who speaks too much will only reflect on their actions and the hereafter a little, as this requires silence. This will prevent one from assessing their deeds, which inspires one to perform

more righteous deeds and sincerely repent from their sins. This person will then be prevented from changing for the better.

Speaking too much will cause one to get involved in things which do not concern them. This always leads to trouble for oneself and others, such as fractured and broken relationships. In addition, the one who fails to avoid the things which do not concern them will not make their Islam excellent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317. Salvation lies in striving to make one's faith excellent.

Speaking too much also leads to regular arguments and disagreements, which only causes stress for the speaker and others. Whereas, avoiding vain and evil speech will prevent this thereby ensuring the person obtains peace.

Finally, those who speak too much often discuss things which are entertaining and fun. This will cause them to adopt a mentality whereby they dislike discussing or listening to serious issues, such as death and the hereafter. This will prevent them from preparing adequately for the hereafter, which will lead to a great regret and a potential punishment.

All of this can be avoided if one simply remains silent from sinful and vain speech and instead only speaks good words. Therefore, the one who is silent in this way will be saved from trouble in this world and from punishment in the next world.

Socializing - 92

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a person not to get angry.

In reality, this Hadith does not mean a person should never get angry as anger is an innate characteristic which is even found in the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. In fact, in some rare cases anger can be useful such as, in self-defense. This Hadith actually means that a person should control their anger so it does not lead them to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, something demonstrated perfectly by the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them.

In addition, this Hadith shows that anger can lead to many evils and controlling it leads to much good.

Firstly, this advice is a command to adopt all the good characteristics which will encourage one to control their anger, such as patience.

This Hadith also indicates that a person should not act according to their anger. Instead, they should struggle with themselves in order to control it so that it does not lead them to sins. Controlling anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a great deed and leads to divine love. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

“...who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good.”

There are many teachings within Islam which encourage Muslims to control their anger. For example, as anger is linked to and inspired by the Devil, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3282, advises that an angry person should seek refuge in Allah, the Exalted, from the Devil.

An angered Muslim has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, to cling to the ground. This could mean that they should prostrate on the Earth until they calm down. In fact, the more one takes an inactive body position the less chance they will lash out in anger. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4782. Acting on this advice allows one to imprison their anger within themselves until it passes so that it does not negatively affect others.

A Muslim who is angered should follow the advice given in the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4784. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace

and blessings be upon him, advised the angry muslim to perform ablution. This is because water counters the innate characteristic of anger namely, heat. If one then offers prayer this would help them control their anger further and lead to a great reward.

The advice discussed so far helps an angry muslim to control their physical actions. In order to control one's speech it is best to refrain from speaking when angered. Unfortunately, words can often have more of a lasting effect on others than physical actions. Countless relationships have been fractured and broken because of words spoken in anger. This behaviour often leads to other sins and crimes as well. It is important for a muslim to note the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3970, which warns that it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day.

Controlling anger is a great virtue and the one who masters this has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as a strong person in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6114. In fact, the one who swallows their anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they do not commit a sin because of their anger, will have their heart filled with peace and true faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4778. This is a characteristic of the sound heart which is mentioned in the Holy Quran. It is the only heart which will be granted safety on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

"The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."

As mentioned earlier, anger within limits can be useful. It should be used for repelling harm to one's self, faith and possessions which if done correctly, according to the teachings of Islam, is counted as anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This was the state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was never angered for the sake of his own desires. He only became angry for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050. The character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the Holy Quran, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1739. This means he would be pleased with what it was pleased with and angered with what it was angered with. In addition, hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. The root of hatred is anger. This makes it clear that Islam does not command one to abolish anger, as this is not really possible to achieve, it instead teaches them to control it within the bounds of Islam.

It is important to note, that becoming angered only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is praiseworthy but if this anger causes one to exceed the limits then it becomes blameworthy. It is absolutely vital for one to control their anger according to the teachings of Islam even when they are angered for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4901, warns of a worshipper who angrily claimed Allah, the Exalted, would not forgive a specific sinful person. As a result this worshipper will be sent to Hell while the sinner will be forgiven on Judgment Day.

The origins of evil consist of four things: failing to control one's desire, fear, evil appetites and anger. Therefore, the one who accepts the advice of this Hadith will remove a quarter of evil from their character and life.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to control their anger so it does not cause them to act or speak in a way which will lead them to a great regret in both this world and the next.

Socializing - 93

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is commonly observed that when one decides to do a good deed which requires time, energy and even wealth, they are often put off by others. The first hinderer is the Devil, who tries hard to put one off from performing good deeds. The second hinderer is one's inner self, which is accustomed to laziness and greed. The final hinderer is other people. Unfortunately, many of these hinderers are often Muslims who possess weak faith. As their faith is weak, they fail to appreciate the greatness of performing even small good deeds. And their weak faith inclines them towards enjoying worldly pleasures which directly clashes with doing good deeds. So these people often question why a Muslim is trying to do a good deed, especially those deeds which require time, energy and wealth. For example, a Muslim might be determined to create a website which shares Islamic knowledge. Others will often put them off by belittling their plan, as they do not value the importance of good deeds. Those who are determined to give charity will be put off by others who possess weak faith. They will attempt to scare them into keeping hold of their wealth in case they face unforeseen financial difficulties. The examples are endless of how people, especially Muslims with weak faith, put off others from doing good deeds, through belittling what they desire to do.

In cases like this, a Muslim who desires to do something good must choose who they consult wisely. Just like a sick person only consults a doctor, or when someone having car troubles only consults a mechanic, a Muslim must only consult those who possess strong faith. This is the one who learns and acts on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only this

person will appreciate the importance of small good deeds and therefore encourage others to do them. One should not consult a person who does not possess Islamic knowledge, as they will only belittle their plan and ultimately put them off from it, even if their intention is not bad. This advice has been indicated in chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 60:

"...And let them not disquiet you who are not certain [in faith]."

Socializing - 94

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is strange how many people often label others as selfish even though they are the ones being selfish. According to them, being selfish is when one chooses their own happiness while contradicting the choice, opinion and happiness of someone else. This is not selfishness according to Islam unless the rights of others are being violated in one's pursuit of their lawful worldly choice. One must understand that in a situation which directly involves them, such as choosing a spouse for themselves, then making a lawful choice on who to marry according to their own happiness is not selfishness, even if the opinion, choice and happiness of others, such as relatives, are contradicted. In reality, the one who demands others to follow their opinion and happiness, even though the situation does not directly involve them, such as their relative choosing a spouse, is the selfish person. When a lawful situation directly involves a person, they should consider the opinions of others but in no way is it selfish for them to choose what makes them happy, as long as the rights of others are not violated. It is an act of sincerity to others when one puts aside their opinion and choice in situations that does not directly involve them and instead only considers the happiness of the people directly involved in the situation, such as the couple getting married. Whereas, to force one's opinions and choices on others in situations which do not directly involve them is selfish, as the happiness of the people directly involved in the situation is the most important thing, as long as it does not involve the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is a shame how many people make others feel bad by accusing them of selfishness, even though they are the selfish ones.

To conclude, as long as the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, is avoided, which includes violating the rights of people, a Muslim should choose their choice, opinion and happiness in the situations which directly involve them, as this is not behaving selfishly.

Socializing - 95

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. People often care about and ask others whether they are a good person in respect to their relationship. For example, a mother will ask her child if they think she is a good mother. A person will ask their friend whether they think they are a good friend or not. Being someone society deems good in respect to their relationships should not be the main concern of a Muslim. Their main concern should be whether they are a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, or not. This question cannot be answered by society, culture or fashion. It can only be answered when one compares their behaviour to what is commanded and encouraged in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is even more important to prioritize when one reaches elderly age, as their time on Earth is running out swiftly. The issue with worrying about whether one is defined as good in their relationships with people according to the opinion and standards set by people, culture and fashion, is that these things are fickle and the opinions of people vary drastically. As a result, what one considers a good person in respect to their relationships, such as a good mother, another person will consider them a bad person in respect to that same relationship. For example, one son may consider their mother, a good mother, whereas his sister may consider their mother, a bad mother. This often occurs in society. As a result of this fickleness, one will never please people and therefore they will not find comfort and peace in their opinions.

In addition, the one who is always concerned about people, fashion and culture and their opinions about them in respect to their relationships, will easily neglect their relationship with Allah, the Exalted, which may result in them becoming a bad slave. As Allah, the Exalted, alone controls

everything in this world and in the next, the one who fails to become a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, will not find peace and success in either worlds, even if they strive hard to obtain the good opinions of people in respect to their worldly relationships.

Finally, even if one obtains the good opinions of people, fashion and culture in respect to their relationships, it will not save them from the consequences of being a bad slave of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Whereas, the one who focuses on being a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, will obtain peace of mind, as they will only be concerned with Him and His opinion of them, instead of the varied opinions of countless people. Pleasing One is easier and more satisfying than pleasing many. In addition, the one who tries to be a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, will inevitably become a good person in respect to their relationships with people e.g. a good mother, friend, neighbour, etc., as fulfilling the rights of people is an important part of being a good slave of Allah, the Exalted. But the difference between this and the negative attitude of prioritizing the opinions of people, is that this good slave of Allah, the Exalted, will fulfill the rights of people but will not bother about the opinions of people in respect to them and their relationships. They will not care if people consider them bad in respect to their relationships, as most people's opinions are based on worldly standards. They will only care and live by the standards set by Allah, the Exalted. The one who lives like this will not be negatively affected by the bad opinions of people, fashion and culture, in this world or on Judgement Day. For example, a mother may believe her son is a terrible son, as she judges him based on worldly standards. But as he is a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, he fulfils the rights of his mother in this world and her negative opinion of him will not affect him in this world or on Judgement Day, meaning, he will be judged by Allah, the Exalted, as a good son.

To conclude, peace of mind and success lies in prioritizing being a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, and only worrying about His opinion about them. Whereas, anxiety, stress and difficulties in both worlds lie in prioritizing the opinions of people in respect to their relationships.

Socializing - 96

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. There is a common misconception which prevents a person from improving their character towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. People often comment that one should not judge others. Even though this is true to a certain extent, unfortunately, many people have completely twisted its meaning out of context in order to use it as an excuse to avoid improving their behaviour. In reality, judging others is a vital part of every aspect of one's life. For example, a person judges others in order to decide whether to befriend them or not. One judges another in order to decide whether they would make a good spouse for them or not. A person judges a company before applying for a job there. An employer judges candidates in order to find the best one to join their team. A parent judges a range of tutors before hiring one for their child. A business owner will judge another business owner to determine whether to do business with them or not. The examples of judging others in respect to their behaviour, character and actions are virtually limitless. So to claim one should not judge others at all is simply foolish, as one cannot live in this world without judging others.

In respect to Islam, a Muslim must judge the actions of others, otherwise they cannot fulfill the duty of advising good and forbidding evil in society. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh..."

According to the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, a Muslim cannot perfect their faith without loving, hating, giving and withholding for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. How is this possible to achieve without judging others?

The important duty of aiding others in good and avoiding helping others in bad things cannot be achieved without judging others and their actions. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Many of the examples listed earlier are encouraged by Islam, such as finding a suitable spouse and choosing suitable friends. None of these things can be fulfilled without judging others.

Judging the actions of others according to the teachings of Islam in order to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and to encourage others to do the same is a vital aspect of Islam. In this respect, the judgment of people may seem to come from a person but in reality, it is the judgment of Allah, the Exalted. Something, no Muslim must scorn or criticize.

Judging the ultimate outcome of a person; whether Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them or not or whether they will go to Paradise or not, or judging their intention, are something which a Muslim is not allowed to do, as these things are beyond the knowledge of a Muslim and therefore they have no right to discuss or comment over them.

To conclude, Muslims understand the correct concept of judging others so that they more readily accept the constructive criticism, which is based on the teachings of Islam, from others, so that they improve their character towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Behaving in this manner is a vital part of right guidance and success in both worlds.

Socializing - 97

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the major reasons why the relationships of people become fractured and broken over time is due to ignorance. When one does not know the rights that they owe others nor the rights people owe them, according to the teachings of Islam, people begin to expect and demand things they are not entitled to and they fail to fulfill the rights that they owe others also. For example, parents often believe that their children owe them complete obedience and submission meaning, their child must agree with and do whatever their parent suggests. But this is simply not true in Islam. A child does have the right to make their own lawful choices in life, even if it contradicts the opinions of their parents, as long as they maintain good manners towards their parents. The major cause of divorce is when people demand things their spouse does not owe them. Siblings often become estranged as they believe their siblings should also support them in every situation without exception and in ways pleasing to them. The examples are virtually endless.

Ignorance of the rights one is owed and the rights they owe others encourages one to make up these standards according to their own desires, culture and fashion. As the desires of people vary considerably, these fabricated standards are never fulfilled by people. This leads to bitterness between people, which over time leads to fractured and broken relationships.

Muslims must avoid this outcome by learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that they know and fulfill the rights they owe others and know the rights people owe them.

In addition, when one gains and acts on Islamic knowledge it will encourage them to behave leniently with others, hoping that Allah, the Exalted, will act leniently with them. This leniency will prevent one from demanding their full rights from others thereby making the lives of others easier, and reducing the risks of arguments. This leniency will also encourage one to let things go whenever they are wronged by others, so that they avoid pettiness. This leads to positivity and peace of mind and prevents fractured and broken relationships. On the other hand, living according to one's own standards causes the opposite to occur. A person easily becomes petty over small issues, they become bitter and continue to hold onto grudges for decades. This leads to enmity, negativity and a pessimistic attitude towards others. All these things prevent peace of mind and lead to fractured and broken relationships.

Muslims must therefore ensure they have healthy relationships with others by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they know and fulfill the rights of people and know the rights people owe them.

Socializing - 98

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is important for people to avoid a major cause of fractured and broken relationships. Namely, behaving negatively towards others when they have not committed a sin. This is often observed in families when one treats their relative in such a manner, whereby they often criticize, chide and take digs at them in order to show their disapproval with their life choices and lifestyle. For example, a parent may take digs at their child who married someone they did not approve of, even though no sin was committed. People, especially elders, wrongfully believe that the people they behave negatively towards must love and respect them under all circumstances. But they fail to understand that people are not Angels. If one is chided and criticized enough over things which are not sinful, a day will certainly come where the person dislikes speaking, seeing or socializing with their relative, even if it is their own parent. This does not mean they do not love or respect them. It means that as people are not Angels, the negative attitude creates negative feelings in a person's heart which causes them to feel anxiety and stress whenever they have to deal with their relative who behaves negatively towards them. In order to avoid this stress and anxiety they feel like avoiding their relative, even though they still love and respect them. For example, a person will avoid attending a family event because of this stress and anxiety, as they do not want to be subjected to negative behaviour and comments. This is a very common reaction and consequence of treating others negatively which is often seen within families.

Muslims must not underestimate the long term effect of treating others in a negative way, even if it only involves criticism and negative comments, as this can build up over time and cause their relationship to fracture and

break. When others have not committed any sins, one should not behave negatively towards them and instead accept the life choices they make. They should concentrate on fulfilling the rights of others by treating them how they themselves desire to be treated by others, which includes treating them in a positive way through one's words and actions, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Socializing - 99

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In the modern world, one of the things which is heavily emphasized and given a lot of attention to in the lives of all people, is socializing. Islam does not prohibit socializing with others and in fact commands Muslims to fulfill the rights of people, according to the teachings of Islam. None the less, Islam always encourages people to understand the purpose of socializing. The main purpose is to aid one another in practically preparing for the hereafter. This involves aiding and encouraging one another to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This attitude leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

On the other hand, society, social media, culture and fashion urges people to connect and socialize for the sake of worldly gain and enjoyment. This attitude defies the purpose of mankind being together on this Earth. Socializing is not an end itself, it is only a means to an end. The ultimate end is to reach the Day of Judgement safely. The example of people being put together in this world for the aim of working together so that they prepare adequately for the hereafter, is like how a team of strangers are put together by a company in order to work together to achieve a business

goal, such as designing, manufacturing and advertising a product. If this team of people failed to remember the purpose of them being together, they will waste time on having fun and other social activities. This will result in them neglecting the purpose of being together and thus their team would be labelled a failure. Similarly, if Muslims fail to understand and fulfill the main reason of socializing then they too will fail to prepare adequately for the hereafter, as they were too busy socializing for worldly reasons. One is allowed to have lawful fun through socializing but they should never behave as if that is the purpose of socializing.

To conclude, people have been put together not to connect to each other as an end goal in itself but to connect to each other so that they can aid each other to connect to Allah, the Exalted. One must never fail to differentiate between the two, otherwise they will completely miss the purpose of being placed together in this world. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, understood this reality and therefore always connected and worked together in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, and as a result they spread justice and peace within society like no other group has ever achieved. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

On the other hand, the one who forgets the purpose of socializing will only cause trouble for themselves in both worlds whenever they socialize with others. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

Socializing - 100

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. There is a powerful and misguiding mentality which has taken deep roots within the Muslim community, namely, being heavily influenced by the concept of "what will people say" about one's actions and choices. This mentality is often clothed under the guise of righteousness so that Muslims adopt it. They claim that if someone fails to care about what others say about them then they will become shameless. In reality, shamelessness is rooted in not caring about the divine vision, hearing and judgment of Allah, the Exalted, not the criticism of people, as most of their criticism has no value in the sight of Islam and one can easily hide their shameless behaviour from people.

The mentality of "what will people say" affects and corrupts many aspects of a person's life and faith. Arguably, the most dangerous affect it has is that a Muslim begins to perform good deeds for the sake of people instead of for the sake of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. For example, a Muslim will only attend a relative's funeral simply to please their other relatives and not in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This Muslim will find that on Judgement Day they will be told to gain their reward for their insincere good deeds from the people they acted for, which will not be possible to do. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. It is important to note that one should not behave to please people as this is minor polytheism and also leads to the loss of reward, as Allah, the Exalted, is free from any partners.

The mentality of "what will people say" also encourages Muslims to behave in ways that are disliked by Islam, such as being extravagant, wasteful and excessive. For example, the majority of Muslim weddings aim to please the relatives of the married couple, as they fear the criticism of people. This causes them to spend lavishly and wastefully.

This mentality can also encourage one to commit sins in order to protect oneself from the criticism of people.

The mentality of "what will people say" also prevents Muslims from acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their teachings often contradict the silly cultural beliefs and practices Muslims have adopted. Fear of being criticised by people prevents one from abandoning their cultural practices for the sake of the two sources of guidance.

The mentality of "what will people say" also prevents Muslims from making the right choices which will lead to their happiness and well-being. For example, many Muslims remain in abusive marriages simply out of fear of the criticism of people, especially their relatives, if they get divorced.

Finally, the mentality of "what will people say" prevents one from making good lawful choices as they fear the criticism of people. For example, Muslims from certain countries will not let their children marry Muslims from

different countries as they fear the criticism of their relatives, even though the marriage proposals are lawful and good.

It is the duty of a Muslim to act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. They must fulfil the rights of people according to the teachings of Islam but this does not mean they should act to please them. It means they must fulfil their rights according to the teachings of Islam whether the people are pleased with them or not. Their pleasure or lack of it is irrelevant. The one who acts according to the pleasure of people will never find peace and happiness in this world nor will they ever obtain the praise of people. Whereas, acting to please Allah, the Exalted, leads to peace and happiness in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

Socializing - 101

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. Wahshi, the man who killed Hamza Bin Abdul Motalib, may Allah be pleased with him, at the Battle of Uhud, joined this delegation in order to secure his safety and accept Islam at the hands of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When he reached Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked about what he had done to Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him, and accepted his testification of faith but asked him if he could avoid unnecessarily meeting him in the future, as seeing him reminded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of the killing and mutilation of his uncle, Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4072.

Even though Wahshi's sins were forgiven, as he accepted Islam, yet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, requested him to avoid meeting him unnecessarily. First of all, this indicates the human nature of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He felt the same feelings that any other human would feel, such as anger and grief. In addition, this request was a great relief for the Muslim community as it made things easier for the Muslims. If the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, behaved as if Wahshi had done nothing, then it would have forced all the Muslims to behave in this manner, as adopting the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is obligatory. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

The vast majority of Muslims would not be able to deal with others in such a manner. Therefore, the request of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made things easy for them. This corrects the false notion of forgiving and forgetting. This incident proves that humans are not computers, who can erase memories from their minds. People are not expected to forget the actions of others, they are instead encouraged to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and continue to fulfill the rights of others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6133, that a believer does not get stung from the same hole twice. Meaning, a Muslim should forgive others and fulfill their rights, but they should not blindly trust others, especially when they have been wronged by them in the past. Ignoring the past actions of others may well encourage them to behave in the same way in the future. Therefore, Muslims must learn from this incident and learn to forgive others and strive to fulfill their rights but they are not expected to forget the actions of others nor blindly trust them.

Socializing - 102

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Prior to Islam women would themselves be counted as something which was inherited by others. Islam abolished this unjust practice and gave them rights which surpassed any other society.

On a general note, before Islam, in the age of ignorance, it was common practice for women to be equated with articles of home use. They would be bought and sold like cattle. A woman had no rights in respect to marriage. Far from being entitled to some share in the inheritance from her relatives, she herself was treated as a piece of the inheritance like other household items. She was considered as something owned by men while she was allowed to own nothing. And she could only spend according to the wishes of a man. Whereas, the man could spend any wealth which should belong to her, like wages, according to his desires. She did not even have the right to question this method. Some groups from Europe even considered women not to be a human and equated her with an animal. Women had no place in religion. They were considered unfit for worship. Some even declared women to possess no souls. It was considered completely normal for a father to kill his newborn or young daughter as they were seen as a shame on the family. Some even believed that no act of justice would be taken against the one who killed a woman. Some customs even killed the wife of a dead husband as she was not seen fit enough to live without him. Some even declared that the purpose of women was only to serve men.

But Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught man to respect all people, made justice and equity the law and men were made responsible for fulfilling the rights of women parallel to their own rights on them. Women were made free and independent. She became the owner of her own life and property, just like men. No man can force a woman to marry someone. If she is forced to without her consent then it becomes her choice to continue the marriage or annul it. No man has a right to spend anything from what belongs to her without her consent and approval. After the death of her husband or after divorce she becomes independent and she cannot be compelled by anyone to do anything. She gets a share in the inheritance like men according to the responsibilities given to her by Allah, the Exalted. To spend on women and treat them well has been declared an act of worship by Allah, the Exalted. All these rights and more have been given to women by none other than Allah, the Exalted. It is strange how those who stand up for women's rights today criticize Islam even though it gave women rights centuries earlier.

Socializing - 103

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over how the human heart was created in such a way that it must have something in it, it can never be empty. Meaning, it must attach to and love something. This is quite obvious if one reflects on this point for a moment. Some people love other people, some love animals, some their career and others love other things. But no matter how much a person loves something eventually a day will come where they will have to say goodbye. Whether this is done voluntarily for example, a person retiring from their career, or forcefully such as death cutting one off from their beloved. It is the reason why some of those who separated from what they loved while they were alive, such as an athlete retiring from their sport, became bitter as their heart and mind continued being attached to their beloved thing but their body could no longer keep up with it. They become bitter as their moment in the spotlight passes and they are forced to move on from their love. This is a universal principle which applies to all irrespective of one's belief or social status. But the only love which strengthens with time and in death is the sincere love for Allah, the Exalted. There is no goodbye for the one who possesses this love only anticipation for the destined meeting which is beyond words to describe. This love only strengthens with the passing of time while all other bonds weaken and eventually break. Therefore, a Muslim should fulfil their duty and responsibilities in respect to the creation but only truly love Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience to Him which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The one who achieves this will never need to say goodbye. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verses 27-28:

“[To the righteous it will be said], ‘O reassured soul. Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him].’”

Socializing - 104

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often claim that as they are very busy in their worldly activities they find it difficult to do voluntary righteous deeds especially, those related to people, such as physically supporting someone. Even though Muslims should strive to perform as much voluntary righteous deeds as possible as it will benefit them in both worlds whereas, their worldly activities will only benefit them in this world none the less, the least these Muslims should do is adopt a neutral mentality towards others. This means that if a Muslim cannot help others they should not hinder them in their lawful and good activities. If they cannot make others happy they should not make them sad. If they cannot make others laugh they should not make them cry. This can be applied to countless scenarios. This is important to understand as many Muslims might do good to others, such as provide them emotional support, but at the same time they destroy their good deeds by being negative towards people. It is important to note, if a Muslim is excessive in being negative towards others it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Having a neutral mentality is actually a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

To conclude, it is best to treat others in a positive way which is a sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. But if they cannot do this the least they should do is treat others in a neutral way. As treating others in a negative way may well lead to one's destruction.

Strengthening Faith - 1

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim cannot make their Islam excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them.

This Hadith contains an all-encompassing advice which should be applied to every aspect of one's life. It includes a person's speech as well as their other physical actions. It means that a Muslim who desires to perfect their faith must avoid those things, through speech and actions, which do not concern them. And instead they must occupy themselves with those things that do. One should take the things that concern them very seriously and strive to fulfil the responsibilities which accompany them, according to the teachings of Islam, solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that one would not be perfecting their faith if they avoided things according to their own thinking or desires. But the one who perfects their faith avoids the things which Islam has advised to avoid. Meaning, one should strive to fulfil all their duties, avoid all sins and the things which are disliked in Islam and even avoid the excess use of unnecessary lawful things. Achieving this excellence is a characteristic of the excellence of faith mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one acts and worships Allah, the Exalted, as if they can observe Him or they at least become fully aware of Allah, the Exalted, observing their every thought and action. Being aware of this divine surveillance will encourage a muslim to always abstain from sins and hasten towards righteous deeds. The one who does not avoid the things which do not concern them will not reach this level of excellence.

A major aspect of avoiding the things which do not concern a person is linked to speech. The majority of sins occur when a person utters words which do not concern them, such as backbiting and slander. The definition of vain talk is when a person utters words which may not be sinful but are useless and therefore not their concern. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2408, vain speech is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Countless arguments, fights and even physical harm have occurred simply because someone spoke about something which did not concern them. Many families have become divided; many marriages have ended because someone did not mind their business. It is why Allah, the Exalted, has advised in the Holy Quran the different types of useful speech which people should concern themselves with. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

In fact, uttering words which are not a person's concern will be the main reason people enter Hell. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2412, that all speech will be counted against a person unless it is connected to advising good, forbidding evil or the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. This means that all other forms of speech are not a person's concern as they will not benefit them. It is important to note, that advising

good encompasses anything which is beneficial in one's worldly and religious life, such as their occupation.

Therefore, Muslims should strive to avoid the things which do not concern them through words and actions so that they can perfect their faith. Put simply, the one who dedicates time to the things which do not concern them will fail in the things which do concern them. And the one who occupies themselves with the things which do concern them will not find time to spend on the things which do not concern them. Meaning, they will achieve success through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

Finally, the one who occupies themselves with the things which concern them will complete all the useful worldly and religious things they are responsible for and therefore obtain peace of mind. One of the main sources of stress is when one occupies themselves with things which do not concern them, as it prevents them from fulfilling their worldly and religious responsibilities. Behaving in the right manner will allow one to complete their important responsibilities while ensuring they have plenty of free time to relax and do the things they enjoy.

Strengthening Faith - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Finally, it involves fulfilling these aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one performs good deeds other than for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, such as showing off. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times and refraining from cherry picking when and what Islamic teachings one will follow according to their desires.

Steadfastness includes sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know that neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast in their faith. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

As indicated by this verse, an aspect of being steadfast is obeying anyone whose commands and advice is rooted in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

"...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness..."

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their spiritual heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs, one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people, if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Strengthening Faith - 3

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of excellence of faith. This excellence refers to one's conduct and behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Acting with excellence has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as chapter 10 Yunus, verse 26:

“For them who have done excellent is the best [reward] - and extra...”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has explained this verse in Hadiths found in Sahih Muslim, numbers 449 and 450. The word extra in this verse refers to when the inhabitants of Paradise will be blessed with the divine vision of Allah, the Exalted. This reward befits the muslim who acts with excellence as excellence means to lead one's life as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted, observing their outer and inner being at all times. A person who can observe a powerful authority watching them will never misbehave out of awe of them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised someone to always behave as if they were constantly being observed by a righteous man they respected. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 5539. Whoever acts in this manner will very rarely commit sins and always hasten towards good deeds. This attitude creates the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and acts as a shield from the fire of trials in this world and the fire of Hell in the hereafter.

This vigilance will ensure one not only fulfills all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, but it also encourages them to fulfill their responsibilities towards the creation. The peak of which is to sincerely treat others with kindness. This person will fulfill the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 251, which advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This level of excellence ensures one acts with the right intention, which is the foundation of faith, according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Success is guaranteed for the one who performs good deeds and demonstrates good behavior with the right intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted. The more excellent a person acts, the stronger their faith becomes until they become a muslim who is far from heedlessness and is always struggling to beautify their hereafter and worldly life according to the teachings of Islam.

It is feared that the opposite of this reward will be given to those who turned away from Allah, the Exalted. As they lived without fearing the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted, they will be veiled from seeing Him in the hereafter. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 15:

“No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be partitioned.”

Those who fail to reach the level of acting as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, must act on the second part of the advice given in the main Hadith under discussion, namely, to sincerely believe that Allah, the Exalted, is constantly observing them. Even though this state is lower in rank than the one who acts as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, none the less, it is a great way of adopting true fear of Allah, the Exalted. As mentioned earlier, this attitude will prevent one from committing sins and encourage them towards good deeds. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 7935, the one who strives to adopt this mentality will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

The divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, is mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 4:

"...He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing."

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised to adopt the true awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, in many Hadiths. For example, in one divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is with whoever remembers Him. This is the reason why it has been reported in Hilyat Al Awliya, volume 1, pages 84 and 85, about the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he shied away from the glitter and pomp of the material world and found solace in the lonely night. Meaning, he sought the companionship of Allah, the Exalted, rather than the companionship of people.

Adopting the awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, not only prevents sins and encourages good deeds but it also prevents loneliness and depression. A person is very rarely affected by mental health issues when they are constantly surrounded by a person who loves them and aids them. No one loves the creation more than Allah, the Exalted, and there is no doubt that He is the source of all aid. Therefore, acting with excellence benefits one's faith, actions, emotional state and the wider society.

A muslim must avoid becoming like those who treat Allah, the Exalted, as the most insignificant of those who observe them. This is a serious spiritual illness which leads to all types of sins and evil behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The one who acts on the lower level by constantly remembering the divine vision will eventually reach the higher level and live as if they can see Allah, the Exalted, constantly observing their outer and inner states. Living in this manner ensures steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all cases.

Both levels of excellence of faith is obtained when one learns and acts on Islamic knowledge. The more they do this, the more they will be aware of the divine presence. Remaining steadfast on this behaviour will then lead to excellence of faith.

Strengthening Faith - 4

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not, is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully, to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. This involves speaking in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, or remaining silent. As this has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176, remaining silent in cases when someone has nothing good to say, is a good deed and is therefore part of remembering Allah, the Exalted.

The highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who does this will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. But this requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge, which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

The one who fulfils all three levels has been promised peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Unfortunately, many Muslims who fulfill their obligatory duties and perform voluntary worship overlook and fail to fulfil these levels of remembering Allah, the Exalted, and as a result they fail to find peace in this world, despite their worship and good deeds.

Strengthening Faith - 5

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 574, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever establishes the two cool obligatory prayers will enter Paradise.

The two cool obligatory prayers refer to the dawn and late afternoon obligatory prayers (Fajr and Asr), as during these two times the weather is cooler than at other times meaning, before sunrise and before sunset.

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes correctly according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as offering them on time. In fact, offering them as soon as they occur is one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252.

Even though, there are five obligatory prayers which must be established yet, only two have been mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. This is because these two prayers are arguably the two hardest to establish. The obligatory dawn prayer occurs at a time when most people are asleep. Therefore, it requires much energy and motivation in order to leave one's comfortable bed in order to offer it correctly. The obligatory late

afternoon prayer mostly occurs at a time where most people have completed their working day and have returned home tired. So to leave one's relaxation after a tiring and even stressful day of work in order to correctly offer their obligatory prayer is difficult. Therefore, if one correctly establishes these two prayers they will, through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, find it easier to establish the other obligatory prayers, which usually occur at more convenient times.

Muslims should therefore strive to establish all their obligatory prayers as it is the very essence of Islam and it in fact separates belief from disbelief. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618.

Finally, one must note that the main Hadith under discussion does not mean one can achieve success by only offering the five obligatory prayers while neglecting their other obligatory duties and responsibilities to Allah, the Exalted, and people. In reality, the one who establishes their obligatory prayers will strive to fulfill all their other obligatory duties and responsibilities, as this is one of the outcomes of establishing the obligatory prayers. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

"...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing..."

In addition, the Hadith guarantees Paradise to the one who establishes their obligatory prayers but does not guarantee that they will not enter Hell first as a result of their sins. Therefore, as always, one must understand the verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths in their correct context.

Strengthening Faith - 6

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the strong believer is more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than a weaker believer.

This does not necessarily refer to physical strength, which one uses to perform righteous deeds. But it also refers to gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge in order to obtain certainty of faith. The one who possesses strong faith will fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people correctly and in every situation, during ease and difficulties, according to their knowledge. Whereas, a weak believer will easily fail in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people in difficult situations.

In addition, the faith of the weak believer is based on blind imitation of others, and not Islamic knowledge. Blind imitation prevents one from improving their behaviour through gaining new knowledge and it often leads to deviant practices, especially when the person one imitates is ignorant themselves. Blind imitation does not suffice when one faces difficult situations, which require steadfastness, which in itself is rooted in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. For example, the one who does not possess Islamic knowledge easily questions and challenges destiny.

The stronger one's faith the greater their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn increases their success in both worlds. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth..."

Strengthening Faith - 7

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares some important things. The first thing mentioned is that Allah, the Exalted, declares war on the person who shows enmity to one of His righteous friends.

This occurs as the one who shows enmity to a person's friend is in fact showing enmity to the person indirectly. This indirectly warns muslims to only befriend the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, and to never show any enmity or dislike for them, as this is the attitude of the enemies of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Devil. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verse 1:

“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies...”

It is important to note, that any form of disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, is waging war against Him. Therefore, a muslim should avoid all forms of disobedience, including disliking those who strive in obeying Him, as this only invites the anger of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, that a person should never insult his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as insulting them is like

insulting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and whoever harms him, has insulted Allah, the Exalted. And this sinful person will soon be punished, unless they sincerely repent.

In addition, as righteousness, which is based on one's intention, is hidden from people, Muslims must avoid disliking other Muslims, as they do not know who is a righteous friend of Allah, the Exalted. So this part of the main Hadith encourages one to show good manners to all Muslims, by treating them in a way one wishes to be treated by people.

The next thing mentioned in the main divine Hadith under discussion is that a muslim can only draw close to Allah, the Exalted, through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties

but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil, as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins....””

The pious muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid the unnecessary and vain things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous

deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

In addition, the Muslims from this higher group strive to use each blessing they have been granted, such as their energy and time, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They avoid using them in ways which will not please Allah, the Exalted, nor benefit them in the hereafter, even if these ways are permissible.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds, Allah, the Exalted, blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways...”

This muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who, when they speak, they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they

are silent, they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act, they act for Him and when they are still, they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note that this empowerment includes dealing with difficulties with patience and times of ease with gratitude, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This empowerment also includes obtaining peace of mind, as the mental state of the one who is empowered will not be easily shaken nor broken down by the different situations one can face in this world.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things. In addition, no person can and will grant another refuge and protection from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. One can only obtain this protection through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This eliminates the wishful thinking of some who believe they can persist in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and still obtain protection from His punishment, especially in the hereafter, through the intercession of someone else. Even though, the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgement Day is a fact, none the less behaving in this mocking manner may cause one to lose it.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through His sincere obedience, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other prescribed methods are false and nothing but wishful thinking, which has no value or weight in Islam.

Strengthening Faith - 8

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6806, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned seven groups of people who will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

This shade will protect them from the horrors of the Day of Judgment which includes the unbearable heat caused by the Sun being brought within two miles of the creation. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421.

One of these groups includes a young person who was raised in the worship of Allah, the Exalted. This is a great deed as one's desire for worldly things and possessing the mental and physical strength to obtain them is greatest during one's youth. For example, it is common to observe the elderly regularly attending a Mosque but rare to observe a young person. So if they put their desires aside and strive in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, first, then their reward will be great.

It is important to note, this Hadith does not refer to a young person who is constantly worshipping Allah, the Exalted. It refers to the one who fulfils their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, and their duties towards people. The one who behaves in such a manner will find plenty of time to do other lawful things. But this attitude is rarely observed in a young person as most muslims only appreciate the importance of fulfilling their duties when they get older. This is why it is extremely important for parents and elders to encourage their children from a young age to fulfil their duties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even advised parents in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, to encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers before they reach the age when they become obligatory on them. This preparation ensures they will fulfil their duties when they become binding on them. Unfortunately, this is an aspect of raising children muslims often overlook as they encourage their children on succeeding in worldly matters and delay their religious education. But by this time they become set in their ways to act on the commands of Allah, the Exalted.

The next person who will be granted shade on Judgment Day is the muslim whose heart is attached to the Mosques. This includes the muslim who strives to offer their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation. One can understand the seriousness of not performing this deed by understanding the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1481. It warns that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to command the houses of the men who failed to offer their prayers in congregation at the Mosque without a valid excuse to be burned down.

In this day and age for a working muslim it is difficult to offer all their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation. But even still with the exception of a few every muslim can offer at least a few obligatory prayers in congregation at the Mosque every day. For example, those who work

night shifts can offer the obligatory prayers which occur during the day. And those who work day shifts can offer the obligatory prayers which occur during the night with congregation at the Mosque.

This Hadith also includes those who regularly attend Mosques in order to teach or learn Islamic knowledge as this deed causes their hearts to keep returning to the Mosque.

The final person mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion who will be granted shade on Judgment Day is the one who remembers Allah, the Exalted, in solitude and cries. Firstly, the fact that this reaction occurs in solitude indicates the sincerity of the muslim meaning, their reaction is purely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This reaction could be due to a number of factors which include one's realization of the uncountable blessings they have been granted even though they show a lack of gratitude for them by using them incorrectly. One's understanding of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, when He conceals their sins from the creation. A muslim continuously receiving blessings from Allah, the Exalted, even when they sin. A muslim's reflection and assessment of their own deeds which encourages them to sincerely repent. One's realization that they will only be forgiven and granted Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and not because of their righteous deeds, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6467. The important thing to note is that this reaction only occurs when one truly reflects on this material world, the afterlife, death, Judgment Day and their deeds. The one who is heedless to this will never achieve this outcome.

Strengthening Faith - 9

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave some important pieces of advice. The first is to fear Allah, the Exalted, through piety.

This is achieved when one fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is only achieved through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This advice encompasses all the teachings and duties of Islam. When one strives in this manner they will eventually reach the high level of faith called excellence. This is when one acts, such as performing the prayer, as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, observing them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This ensures one fulfils their duties both to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation. The latter involves fulfilling the rights of people according to the teachings of Islam. This is best fulfilled by treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

The second advice given in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should follow up a sin with a righteous deed so that it wipes out the sin. This refers to minor sins only as major sins require sincere repentance. If one adds sincere repentance to their righteous deed then it will erase any sin, minor or major. But a part of acting rightly is to strive not to repeat the sin again, as sinning with the intention of following it up with a righteous deed is a dangerous misleading mentality. One should

strive not to commit sins and when they do occur, they must sincerely repent. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Strengthening Faith - 10

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a muslim must never consume alcohol, as it is the key to all evil.

Unfortunately, this major sin has increased amongst the muslims over time. This is the key to all evil as it gives rise to other sins. This is quite obvious as a drunk loses control over their tongue and physical actions. One only needs to look at the news to observe how much crime is committed due to drinking alcohol. Even those who drink moderately only cause damage to their bodies, which science has proven. The physical and mental diseases associated with alcohol are numerous and cause a heavy burden on the National Health Service and the tax payers. It is the key to all evil as it negatively affects all three aspects of a person: their body, mind and soul. It destroys the relationships between people, as alcohol negatively affects one's behaviour. For example, there is a clear correlation between alcohol consumption and domestic violence. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 90:

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

The fact that drinking alcohol has been placed next to things which are associated with polytheism in this verse, highlights how important it is to avoid.

It is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3376, that the one who drinks alcohol regularly will not enter Paradise.

Spreading the Islamic greeting of peace is a key to obtaining Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 68. None the less, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 1017, advises muslims not to greet someone who regularly drinks alcohol.

Alcohol is a unique major sin as it has been cursed in ten different ways in a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3380. These include the alcohol itself, the one who produces it, the one it is produced for, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried to, the one who uses the wealth obtained through selling it, the one who drinks it and the one who pours it. The one who deals with something that has been cursed like this will not obtain true success unless they sincerely repent.

Even though, breaking alcohol addiction is difficult, none the less, one must strive hard to avoid all the things which will tempt them towards it, such as bad friends. They must utilise all the help available to them, such as counselling sessions. They must never forget that Allah, the

Exalted, does not burden a person with a duty they cannot complete.
Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”

These things will aid them in turning away from this major sin for good.

Strengthening Faith - 11

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that deeds should be done correctly, sincerely and moderately. He added that a person's deeds will not take them to Paradise and concluded that the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are those which are regular even if they are few.

Muslims should ensure that they perform deeds correctly meaning, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as performing deeds without this guidance will lead one away from the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

Next, they must perform them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and not for any other reason, such as showing off. These people will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Muslims should perform voluntary righteous deeds moderately without over burdening themselves as this often leads to one giving up. Instead, they should act according to their capacity and means regularly even if these actions are little in size and number, as this is far superior to big actions which are performed once in a while. Moderation also prevents one from neglecting any of their duties and responsibilities, whether they are in respect to Allah, the Exalted, or people. Moderation also allows one to fulfil all their responsibilities while ensuring they have plenty of time to enjoy lawful pleasures without excessiveness, extravagance or waste.

Finally, a muslim must understand that their righteous deeds are a blessing from Allah, the Exalted, as the inspiration, knowledge, strength and opportunity to perform them comes from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, no matter how many good deeds one performs they will never be able to show adequate gratitude for the countless blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted. Understanding these facts prevent one from adopting the deadly characteristic of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Strengthening Faith - 12

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that righteousness is good character and a sin creates a negative internal feeling and its doer would dislike others finding out about it.

This Hadith indicates that the root of all good and righteousness is good character. This is when one fulfills their duty towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And it includes fulfilling the rights of people according to the teachings of Islam. This can be fulfilled when one treats people in the same way they desire others to treat them. In fact, a person will not become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. Good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people is important to adopt as it will be the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day and the person who possesses good character will gain the equivalent reward of the one who prays and fasts continuously. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003.

The main Hadith under discussion also indicates how to judge one's actions. A sin is something which creates a negative internal feeling and the sinner would dislike others finding about their actions. If a muslim adheres to this advice they will avoid the vast majority of sins, as human beings have been created in a way which alerts them when they commit most sins. This guilty conscience is in fact, a proof that one's soul has

been predisposed to believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement, as one feels negatively towards sins, even when they fully believe they will not be held accountable for them by people, such as the police.

It is important to note, muslims must still strive to gain and act on Islamic knowledge, as this internal warning does not occur with all sins and they will lose this warning system if they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244. But none the less, it is still an excellent deterrent from sins, which muslims must pay heed to.

Strengthening Faith - 13

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 28, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised two characteristics which lead a muslim to Paradise.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 28, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised three characteristics which lead a muslim to Paradise.

The first is to consume lawful food. This includes avoiding obtaining and utilizing the unlawful, such as wealth, in any aspect of one's life. It has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342, that the righteous deeds of a muslim who utilizes unlawful provision will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Obtaining lawful provision is the foundation stone of Islam, without it success is not possible. As one's lawful provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, according to the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, a Muslim must therefore utilise their strength and resources in obtaining it, full well believing they will receive it. This will prevent them from pursuing the unlawful.

The second characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is following the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean only learning them but more importantly it includes acting on them. This encompasses

fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim must never cherry pick which traditions to follow nor misinterpret them in order to fulfill their desires. They should not rearrange the order of priority of his traditions meaning, the established traditions should be acted on first followed by the non-established meaning, the non-regular traditions. As the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the practical role model of the Holy Quran, it is not possible to achieve success and peace in either this world or the next without following in his footsteps practically. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

Strengthening Faith - 14

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise by it on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it through a reliable scholar. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they act on the Holy Quran correctly, as the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the practical implementation of the Holy Quran. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But as warned by the main Hadith, the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who avoid understanding and acting on it or intentionally misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems, a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool, which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox when the issue is resolved. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one through the difficulties of this world in order to reach the hereafter safely. This purpose is not possible to fulfill without understanding and acting on the Holy Quran. Blind recitation is simply not enough. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet it cannot be driven, which is the main purpose of a car. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Strengthening Faith - 15

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit muslims from going to places other than the Mosques, nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational prayers and attending religious gatherings, over visiting the markets and other places, unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily, as they are places where sins more often occur. Whenever they do go to other places they must ensure they avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, which includes wronging others. They should avoid over socialising, as this is the cause of the majority of sins, which occur in society.

The Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Just like a student

benefits from a library, as it is an environment created for studying, similarly, muslims can benefit from Mosques, as their very purpose is to encourage muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted, correctly.

Mosques are also an excellent place to remind one of their purpose, which is to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. The Mosques also encourage one to prioritise their activities in the correct way, so that they fulfill their necessities and responsibilities, prepare adequately for the hereafter and enjoy lawful pleasures in moderation. The one who avoids the Mosques often wastes their time and resources on vain and pointless activities and they therefore lose out on gaining benefit in both worlds.

Not only should a muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others, such as their children, to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

Strengthening Faith - 16

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1081, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims how to gain blessings in their provision, divine support and an improvement in their condition and state.

The first thing is to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, before one dies. As the time of death is unknown, this Hadith actually indicates sincerely repenting whenever one commits a sin, meaning, repenting without delay. This consists of feeling regretful, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and whoever else has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the same or a similar sin again and, if possible, to make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The next thing advised in the main Hadith is that a muslim must make use of their time before they become preoccupied with responsibilities, an illness or a difficulty. A muslim must utilise their resources, such as their time, on things which please Allah, the Exalted, and avoid vain and sinful things. One must remember the great regret they will face on Judgement Day when they observe the reward given to those who used their resources in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, if they failed to do the same. They must not postpone doing good to a time or day which they are not guaranteed to reach and even if they reach it, they may not be in the right position to do the good deed. It is hoped that the one who behaves in this manner will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, when they are no longer in a position to perform extra righteous deeds due to a change in circumstances. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in

Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. A Muslim must first aim to minimize using their time on things which do not benefit them in this world or the next. Next, they should try to reduce the things which only benefit them in this world and concentrate more on doing things which benefit them in the hereafter, which by definition, automatically benefits them in this world too. The one who remains steadfast on this will use their resources, such as their time, in the right way, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a muslim must strengthen their bond with Allah, the Exalted, by remembering Him much. True remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, consists of three levels. The first is internal remembrance meaning, to correct one's intention so that they only act to please Him. This is proven when one does not expect nor hope from any return or gratitude from people. The second level consists of remembering Allah, the Exalted, by speaking good words and avoiding vain and sinful speech. And the highest level is to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, through one's actions by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. This has been discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith is giving much charity both hidden and open. This includes both the obligatory and voluntary charity. It is important to note, this means giving charity according to one's means, whether it is much or little. Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity, He observes and judges actions based on quality meaning, one's sincerity. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. This leaves muslims with no excuses but to give charity according to their means. In addition, it is important to give charity regularly instead of once in a while, as regular deeds are more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, even if they are little. This has been

advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. Finally, those who desire to encourage others to give charity can give it publicly. This will lead to them gaining the same reward as those who donate because of their inspiration. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. But those who are fearful of showing off, which cancels their reward, should do so privately. Islam has provided many options and opportunities for muslims to gain much reward in order to obtain peace and success in both worlds. One must remember that charity includes all good deeds that help others, not just wealth. So the one who does not possess wealth, should give charity in other ways, such as giving others their time, energy and emotional support. The least one can do is keep their verbal and physical harm away from others, as this is considered as giving charity to oneself. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

Strengthening Faith - 17

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 9:

"And those who believe and do righteous deeds - We will surely admit them among the righteous."

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient muslims. How can a disobedient muslim be counted as an

obedient muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 58:

"And not equal are the blind and the seeing, nor are those who believe and do righteous deeds and the evildoer. Little do you remember."

Finally, the main Hadith also indicates the importance of befriending good people, as one is influenced, negatively or positively, by their companions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. Therefore, if one desires to imitate the righteous, they should befriend them in this world. This company and imitation will increase the love one has for the righteous. This real love unites one with their beloved in the hereafter. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

Strengthening Faith - 18

In a Divine Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all righteous deeds people perform are for themselves except for fasting, as this is for Allah, the Exalted, and He shall reward it directly.

This Hadith indicates the uniqueness of fasting. One of the reasons it is described in this manner is because all other righteous deeds are visible to people, such as the prayer, or they are between people, such as secret charity. Whereas, fasting is a unique righteous deed, as others cannot know someone is fasting by only observing them.

In addition, fasting is a righteous deed which puts a lock on every aspect of oneself. Meaning, a person who fasts correctly will be prevented from committing verbal and physical sins, such as looking at and hearing unlawful things. This is also achieved through the prayer but the prayer is only performed for a short time and is visible to others whereas, fasting occurs throughout the day and is invisible to others. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

“...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...”

It is clear from the following verse a person who does not complete the obligatory fasts without a valid reason will not be a true believer, as the two have been directly connected. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 723, that if a muslim does not complete a single obligatory fast without a valid reason they cannot make up for the reward and blessings lost, even if they fasted every day for their entire life.

In addition, as indicated by the verse quoted earlier, fasting correctly leads to piety. Meaning, simply starving during the day does not lead to piety but paying extra attention to abstaining from sins and performing righteous deeds during the fast will lead to piety. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 707, warns that a fast will not be significant if one does not abstain from speaking and acting on falsehood. A similar Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1690, warns that some fasting people obtain nothing except hunger. When one becomes more aware and careful in obeying Allah, the Exalted, while they are fasting, this habit will eventually affect them so they behave in a similar way even when they are not fasting. This is in fact true piety.

The righteousness mentioned in the verse quoted earlier is connected to fasting, as fasting reduces one's evil desires and passions. It prevents

pride and the encouragement of sins. This is because fasting hinders the appetite of the stomach and one's carnal desires. These two things lead to many sins. In addition, the desire for these two things is greater than the desire for other unlawful things. So whoever controls them through fasting will find it easier to control the weaker evil desires. This leads to true righteousness.

As briefly indicated earlier, there are different levels of fasting. The first and lowest level of fasting is when one abstains from the things which will break their fast, such as food. The next level is abstaining from sins which damage one's fast thereby reducing the reward of their fast, such as lying. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2235. Fasting which involves each member of the body is the next level. This is when each body part fasts from sins for example, the eyes from looking at the unlawful, the ears from listening to the unlawful and so on. The next level is when one behaves in this manner even when they are not fasting. Finally, the highest level of fasting is abstaining from all things which are not connected to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, one avoids using the blessings they have been granted, such as their time, in ways which are sinful or vain.

A muslim should also fast inwardly as their body fasts outwardly by abstaining from sinful or vain thoughts. They should fast from persisting on their own plans in respect to their desires and try to concentrate on fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. In addition, they should fast from inwardly challenging the decree of Allah, the Exalted, and instead except destiny and whatever it brings knowing Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants, even if they do not understand the wisdom behind these choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Finally, a muslim should aim for the highest reward by keeping their fast a secret and not inform others if it is avoidable, as informing others unnecessarily leads to a loss of reward as it is an aspect of showing off.

Strengthening Faith - 19

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1773, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the reward for an accepted Holy Pilgrimage is nothing except Paradise.

The real purpose of the Holy Pilgrimage is to prepare muslims for their final journey to the hereafter. The same way a muslim leaves behind their home, business, wealth, family, friends and social status in order to perform the Holy Pilgrimage, this will occur at the time of their death, when they take their final journey to the hereafter. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, advises that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds, good and bad, remain with them.

When a muslim bears this in mind during their Holy Pilgrimage, they will fulfil all the aspects of this duty correctly. This muslim will return home a changed person, as they will prioritise preparing for their final journey to the hereafter over amassing the excess aspects of this material world. They will strive in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which includes taking from this world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Muslims should not treat the Holy Pilgrimage as a holiday and a shopping trip as this attitude defeats the purpose of it. It must remind muslims of their final journey to the hereafter, a journey which has no return and no second chances. Only this will inspire one to fulfil the Holy Pilgrimage correctly and prepare adequately for the hereafter. The one who behaves in this manner will be led to Paradise by their Holy Pilgrimage.

Strengthening Faith - 20

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated some important characteristics for muslims to adopt.

The first is that the best worshipper is the one who avoids the unlawful. This includes avoiding all forms of verbal and physical sins. It includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as abandoning them is unlawful. It includes avoiding using the blessings one has been granted in sinful ways. In addition, a muslim must never obtain and utilize unlawful provision, such as wealth, as this will cause all of their righteous deeds to be rejected, as the foundation of good deeds must be lawful. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Just like the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention, similarly the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful. A muslim should avoid doubtful things, as this often leads to the unlawful. Avoiding what creates doubt will safeguard one's faith and honor. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. When one behaves in this manner, all their righteous worship and good deeds will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted.

The last thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that too much laughter kills the spiritual heart. This mentality demands one to always think and discuss funny issues and avoid serious issues. The matter of preparing for death and the hereafter are serious issues and if one avoids thinking about and discussing them then they will never correctly prepare for them. This will lead to a dead spiritual heart. A Muslim must be cheerful and optimistic in order to make others feel

comfortable but they should avoid adopting a constant joking attitude, as this attitude leads to vain and even sinful things.

Strengthening Faith - 21

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on, as muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly and religious matters.

Even though, a muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments, difficulties and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

Strengthening Faith - 22

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2306, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to hasten in performing righteous deeds before seven things occur.

The first is overwhelming poverty. This can refer to financial difficulties which distract a person from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In addition, stressing over wealth can even push one towards the unlawful. A muslim should remember that any righteous deed rooted in the unlawful will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Allah, the Exalted, has allocated provision for the entire creation over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, a muslim should trust that their lawful provision will reach them as long as they continue to strive for it in lawful ways, according to the teachings of Islam. A muslim should remember that Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants according to His infinite wisdom. He does not give according to someone's desires, as this will most likely lead to their destruction. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

And chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills...”

Finally, this part of the Hadith also indicates the importance of using one's excess wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, before a time comes when they may want to give charity but may not be in the right financial position to do so.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should hasten in performing righteous deeds before they become distracted by wealth. Wealth itself is not evil but depending on how one obtains it and uses it can either make it a great blessing for them or a great burden for them in both worlds. If a muslim strives to obtain excess wealth while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people and hoard or mispend their wealth, it will become a great curse for them in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

But if a muslim obtains enough to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance and uses their blessings, such as wealth, in other ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, then they will achieve true richness in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents righteous actions is a debilitating sickness. This is a warning to make use of one's good health before they encounter sickness. One should observe those who have lost their good health either through sickness or through ageing and therefore make use of the good health they possess, by striving to gain success in both worldly and religious matters, while giving priority to religion over the world. For example, a muslim should use their good health to journey to the Mosques regularly in order to offer their obligatory prayers with the congregation before a time comes when they desire to do this but do not possess the physical strength to do so. The amazing thing about utilizing one's good health correctly is that when a muslim eventually loses it, Allah, the Exalted, will continue to grant them the same reward they used to receive when doing good deeds during their time of good health. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who live in heedlessness and fail to utilise their good health will receive no reward during their good health or when they fall sick.

This is connected to the next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion namely, senility. A muslim should make use of their youth and strong intelligence before they reach senility. This includes gaining and acting on knowledge and using one's mental strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. One should not delay in this by believing they can learn and act on Islamic knowledge when they are older as there is no guarantee they will reach older age. In addition, even if they do reach elderly age, it will be difficult for them to learn Islamic knowledge, as the prime age to learn is when one is younger. Finally, even if they manage to gain Islamic knowledge in older age, it will be harder for them to implement the knowledge, as older people become more easily accustomed to their habits and they therefore find it harder to change their behaviour positively. Therefore, one must not delay using their mental strength to learn and act on useful knowledge while they are younger. Finally, it is important to behave in this manner before senility occurs, as even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sought refuge from senility in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6390.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents righteous actions is a sudden death. Death is certain but the time is unknown. A muslim should not live in heedlessness believing that their death is far away, as countless people have and will die long before reaching their life expectancy. Nor should they live in such a way as if they are not going to die at all. Having hopes of a long life can be considered the root of all evil, as it causes one to delay performing righteous deeds, believing they can always perform them tomorrow. It causes them to delay sincere repentance, as they believe they have plenty of time to change for the better. And having hopes for a long life

causes one to prioritize obtaining worldly things, such as wealth, in order to make their expected long life on this Earth comfortable. These things prevent one from preparing adequately for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Muslims should therefore reduce their hope for a long life so that they change for the better and direct their focus to the permanent hereafter. Muslims should not delay and instead act today as the tomorrow they hope for may never arrive. A wise person does not prioritize preparing for a day they may never reach, such as their retirement, over practically preparing for the day which they are guaranteed to experience, such as the day they will die. In addition, they should also strive to perform the righteous deeds which will benefit them in case their life ends unexpectedly, such as an ongoing charity, which benefits the donor, as long as the charity continues to benefit others. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the arrival of the anti-Christ. This event will prevent one from performing righteous deeds and instead tempt them towards disbelief. One lesson to learn from this is the importance of avoiding doubtful things. Just like a person who journeys close to a border is more likely to cross it, similarly, a muslim who is surrounded by temptations will more likely be led astray and fail to perform righteous deeds. The one who avoids places and things which tempt them to commit sins will protect their faith and honor. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Muslims should therefore guard their faith by avoiding things, places and the people who invite or tempt them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and ensure their dependents, such as their children, do the same.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, which prevents one from performing righteous deeds, is the Final Hour.

This is when the trumpet blast will occur. The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...”

This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Whoever responds positively to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world, will not find peace in this world and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet, which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur,

sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable, it makes sense that one responds to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless, no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

Strengthening Faith - 23

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who possesses the following characteristics.

One of these characteristics is earning lawful provision. It is important to understand that if the foundation of someone's life is based in the unlawful then anything build on top of it will be impure. The righteous deeds, such as charity, of the one who obtains and utilizes the unlawful will be rejected. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. The same way the internal foundation of Islam is one's intention, similarly, the outer foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful. A muslim should understand that their provision, which includes wealth, was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation can never change, so there is no need to obtain and utilize the unlawful, as this leads to difficulties in this world, as everything they obtain through the unlawful will become a source of stress for them, and it leads to a severe punishment on a Great Day. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is behaving righteously even when one is in private and away from the observation of others. This muslim becomes fully aware that the divine vision is constantly observing their inner and outer being. This proves their sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as they behave righteously even when they are hidden from the sight of people. As these muslims have gained and acted on Islamic knowledge and strived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they have obtained excellence of faith. This is when one acts, such as offering the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, observing them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This prevents them from bothering about the sight of people, as they are too focused and vigilant over the divine vision. This sincerity is important to adopt so that one only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, and maintains their sincere obedience to Him even in private.

Strengthening Faith - 24

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1660, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned the most virtuous people. This is the one who sincerely strives in the way of Allah, the Exalted.

This includes striving against one's own evil desires and the evil desires of others and instead remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling one's duties towards Allah, the Exalted, as described and one's duties towards people for example, striving in this material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And it includes gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to Islamic knowledge. This will ensure one uses all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. A muslim will not fulfill this Hadith until they fulfill both aspects of their duties.

Strengthening Faith - 25

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2324, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world is like a prison for the believer and a Paradise for the non-believer.

Muslims have been commanded to live by a specific code namely, to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This duty also includes treating the creation in a way one desires others to treat them. Because of this code, muslims are under constant supervision and fully believe that every deed is recorded and will be judged on the Day of Resurrection. Because of this fact a muslim rejects their evil and vain desires in order to please Allah, the Exalted. They continue in this way until they are released from this prison and reach the eternal bliss of the hereafter.

On the other hand, a non-muslim does not live by this code and instead indulges in their desires so this world becomes like a Paradise for them, whereby they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to themselves. But if they die in this state, the hereafter will become their eternal prison.

Therefore, a muslim should make their life easier by adhering to the rules of this world until they are released. But if they keep breaking them they will only face one hardship after another, just like a prisoner faces hardship if they keep breaking the rules of their prison.

But it is important to note, this does not mean a muslim's life is bad. It only means they are constantly being observed and must live by a code in order to succeed, they must use their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The truth is that the one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, correctly will find peace of mind and body even if outwardly they appear to be in a difficulty. This is because Allah, the Exalted, the Controller of hearts, places contentment in their heart. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

This is directly opposite to those who use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to themselves, those who outwardly appear to be enjoying the luxuries of the world but face anxiety, stress, depression and suicidal thoughts as they have obtained no peace of mind or body. A muslim should therefore never be fooled by outward appearances. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Strengthening Faith - 26

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, they will receive. In each case, a muslim's minimal effort will lead to receiving a greater mercy. This mercy will ensure they are rightly guided through every situation they face so that they overcome them in order to obtain peace of mind, body and true lasting success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But the one who holds back from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and instead uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to themselves, will not obtain this mercy and they therefore will not obtain right guidance during their life. Instead they will encounter one difficulty after another, one moment of darkness after another. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Strengthening Faith - 27

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It includes fulfilling the rights of people, which involves treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take a muslim one step closer to the unlawful. The closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it occurred gradually, not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech meaning, speech which derives no

benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

Strengthening Faith - 28

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons, all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

“And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms...”

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer...”

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 6:

“...But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it...”

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand, they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit, they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.

The other major issue is that some muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy Quran, as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

“...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.”

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma'un, verses 4-5:

“So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer.”

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

“[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" They will say, "We were not of those who prayed.”

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that delaying the obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until their children are older, have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families most encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worse thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this, will find that none of them have counted and thus they will be treated as one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation, usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“...and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds, such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions, they are only following their own desires, even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

Finally, as warned by the main Hadith, the one who persists on abandoning the obligatory prayers may well find that they leave this world without their faith. In fact, they may well lose it during their life without even realizing it. One must never fool themselves into thinking it is acceptable to fail to support their verbal claim to faith with actions, such as the obligatory prayers. One must bear in mind that the very definition of Muslim, is the one who has practically and internally submitted

themselves to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, there is no such thing as being a Muslim who does not practice Islam, as this attitude contradicts the definition of a Muslim. If a person does not fulfil the definition of a Muslim, how can they consider themselves as one?

Strengthening Faith - 29

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that supplication is the essence of worship.

This is because it is a practical demonstration of humility and one's servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, as it is befitting for the servant to ask from the Master.

It is important to know that according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, every good supplication is accepted in three ways. It is either fulfilled, the equivalent reward is given in the hereafter or an equivalent evil is removed from one's life.

In the following verse, Allah, the Exalted, guarantees a response to all those who perform supplication. Therefore, one should always bear this in mind and persist in supplications. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you...”

Even before supplicating one should ensure their earnings are lawful and what they consume is lawful. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2989, that the supplication of a person who earns and consumes the unlawful will never be accepted.

The first etiquette of supplication is that one should try to face the Qibla when supplicating. This was the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An example of this action is found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2899.

One should raise their hands begging Allah, the Exalted, to fulfill their desire, as this was the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1030.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, is too shy and generous to turn away a beggar empty handed who raises their hands to Him.

One should begin and conclude their supplication by first praising Allah, the Exalted, and then sending blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1481.

In fact, as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 486, a person's supplication remains suspended between the Heavens and the Earth until they send blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One should praise Allah, the Exalted, with phrases mentioned in the Holy Quran or the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The beautiful names of Allah, the Exalted, are found extensively throughout these divine teachings and should be utilised. For example, chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 24:

"He is Allah, the Creator, the Producer, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names..."

The best supplications are found in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and therefore should be used. For example, chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 41:

"Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established."

But it is absolutely acceptable to supplicate for specific things, as long as they are lawful.

As advised in the Holy Quran one should supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, with humility, hoping for His mercy and in fear of His greatness. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 56:

“...And invoke Him in fear and aspiration...”

It is vital to supplicate with enthusiasm full well believing Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil one's needs. In addition, as advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3479, Allah, the Exalted, does not respond to someone who supplicates while heedless or distracted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3505, that when the following verse of the Holy Quran is recited the supplication is always accepted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 87:

“...There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”

One should seal their supplication with the word, Ameen, as this ensures its acceptance. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 938.

After the supplication is concluded, it is a practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to wipe one's hands over their face. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1492.

Finally, one should be persistent in supplicating, as giving up is a hasty action which can lead to the supplication being unfulfilled. This warning is given in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3387.

One should make it a habit to remember Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease so that Allah, the Exalted, will help them in times of difficulty. This is advised in a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803. As advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3499, Allah, the Exalted, readily accepts the supplication made after the obligatory prayers and in the last part of the night. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6321, advises that in the last part of the night the divine descent occurs at which point Allah, the Exalted, calls out and responds to supplications. There is a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 521, which advises that the supplication between the two call to prayers is never rejected. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that a muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, while they are prostrating and they should therefore supplicate to Him at this time. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1138. As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1046, there is an hour during every Friday where Allah, the Exalted,

readily accepts supplications. When a fasting person breaks their fast their supplication is also accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1753. One should ask the sick to supplicate for them, as it has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1441, that their supplications are like the supplications of the Angels. The supplication made when drinking Zamzam water is always accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3062. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2540, advises that the supplication at the time when it rains is accepted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534, encourages people to supplicate for others in their absence, as they are readily accepted. If one is facing any form of oppression they should supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, as they will be accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1905. This same Hadith advises that the supplication of the traveller is never rejected. Finally, one should encourage their parents to supplicate for them as they are readily accepted. This is supported by a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3862.

Some do not regularly supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, as they claim that He is All Aware and requires no one to inform Him of their desires. Even though this is a fact, it is better to supplicate, as this is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them all, and has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you.” Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.”

Supplicating is an excellent way to demonstrate one's humility and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In fact, as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3370, nothing is more honourable to Allah, the Exalted, than supplication. Finally, Allah, the Exalted, becomes angry when a person does not supplicate to Him, as it may indicate they believe they are independent of Allah, the Exalted, which is not true. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3373.

Finally, one must always remember that the supplications found within the Holy Quran and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are secondary to actions. Meaning, the supplications are performed after an act of practical obedience. This indicates that supplications support actions. Therefore, supplications without the practical obedience of Allah, the Exalted, are unlikely to be fruitful. This was not the habit of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, or the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Unfortunately, many Muslims have become excellent at making supplications but fail to practically obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Even the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of practical worship, which is supported by supplications. Supplications cannot replace practical obedience, they instead support them. Both must be present in order to achieve peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 10:

"...To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it..."

Strengthening Faith - 30

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not based on Islam will be rejected.

If muslims desire lasting success in both worldly and religious matters they must strictly adhere to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though, certain actions which are not directly taken from these two sources of guidance can still be considered righteous deeds, it is important to prioritize these two sources of guidance over all else. In truth, the more one acts on things which are not taken from these two sources, even if they are righteous deeds, the less they will act on these two sources of guidance. An obvious example is how many muslims have adopted cultural practices into their lives which do not have a foundation in these two sources of guidance. Even if these cultural practices are not sins, they have preoccupied muslims from learning and acting on these two sources of guidance, as they feel satisfied with their behaviour. This leads to ignorance of the two sources of guidance, which in turn will only lead to misguidance.

This is why a muslim must learn and act on these two sources of guidance which have been established by the leaders of guidance and only then act on other voluntary righteous deeds if they have the time and energy to do so. But if they choose ignorance and fabricated practices, even if they are not sins, over learning and acting on these two sources of guidance they will not achieve success.

Finally, when one persists on doing deeds that are not directly connected to the two sources of guidance, due to ignorance, they will easily fall into practices and beliefs which contradict established Islamic knowledge. This takes the Muslim down the path of sins and misguidance while they think they are rightly guided. The one who knows they are lost is likely to accept and alter their direction when advised to by others. But the one who thinks they are on the correct path is highly unlikely to alter and correct their direction, even when they are warned by others who possess knowledge and clear evidence. The only way to avoid this outcome is to strive to gain and act on the knowledge found in the two sources of guidance and avoid other actions, even if they appear to be good deeds.

Strengthening Faith - 31

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the lawful and unlawful have been made clear by Islam. In between them are doubtful things which should be avoided in order to protect one's faith and honor.

The vast majority of muslims are aware of the obligatory duties and the majority of unlawful things, such as drinking alcohol. So these create no doubt within muslims. Therefore, they should act according to their clear knowledge. Meaning, fulfil the obligatory duties and abstain from the unlawful according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other things which are not obligatory and create a doubt in society should therefore be avoided. Allah, the Exalted, will not question why someone did not perform a voluntary deed, instead He will ask why they performed a voluntary deed. Therefore, leaving the voluntary action will have no consequences in the hereafter whereas performing a voluntary deed will namely, punishment, reward or forgiveness. It is important for muslims to act on this short but extremely important Hadith as it will solve and prevent many problems and debates. It is important to understand that when one indulges in doubtful or even vain things it will take them one step closer to the unlawful. For example, sinful speech is often preceded by vain and useless speech. Therefore, it is much safer for a muslim's faith and honor to avoid doubtful and vain things.

This Hadith also indicates the importance of adhering to the basic and clear teachings of Islam while avoiding things which have not been

clarified nor discussed in the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If these issues were important, they would have been discussed in the two sources of guidance. Unfortunately, many Muslims concentrate so much on debating on side issues, issues which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day, that they distract themselves and others from those things which Allah, the Exalted, will question them about. This attitude must be avoided.

Strengthening Faith - 32

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7400, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who continues worshipping Allah, the Exalted, during widespread turmoil and seditions is like the one who has emigrated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime.

The reward of emigrating to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his life time was a great deed. In fact, it erased all of one's previous sins, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 321.

Worshipping Allah, the Exalted, means to continue sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This ensures one continues to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

It is obvious that the time mentioned in this Hadith has arrived. It has become very easy to become misguided from the teachings of Islam as worldly desires have opened up for the muslim nation. Due to advancements in social media, fashion and culture it has become easier for Muslims to falsely believe peace of mind lies in misusing the blessings they have been granted. It has become easier to adopt the

mentality of following the majority, who have reduced faith to empty practices which have no bearing on how one practically uses the blessings they have been granted. Wishful thinking in Allah, the Exalted, has become widespread amongst the Muslim nation whereby they ignore the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet expect peace and salvation in both worlds. What was considered deviant behaviour by any sensible person has become something people are being urged to embrace. Turning away from all of this misguidance will be difficult and even one's family and friends will criticize them for holding on to the teachings of Islam instead of following the majority. But if one persists Allah, the Exalted, will replace any losses they suffer, such as the loss of love and respect from friends and relatives, with something much superior, namely, peace of mind and body. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And what Allah, the Exalted, has reserved for them in the hereafter is much greater. On the other hand, those who turn away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, thereby misusing the blessings they have been granted, will find that all their worldly relationships and blessings become a source of stress and curse for them in this world. And what they receive in the hereafter will be far worse. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, muslims should not get distracted by the worldly desires which have become widespread and avoid controversial issues and people and instead remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in every aspect of their life, if they desire to obtain the reward mentioned in this Hadith.

Strengthening Faith - 33

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1145, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, descends every night to the nearest Heaven according to His infinite majesty and invites people to ask Him to fulfill their needs so that He can fulfill them.

Voluntary night time worship proves one's sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as no other eyes are watching them. Offering it is a means to having an intimate conversation with Allah, the Exalted, and it is a sign of one's servanthood to Him. It has countless virtues, for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, advises that it is the best voluntary prayer.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the voluntary night prayer. This shows that those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3579, advises that a muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, in the last part of the night. Therefore, one can derive countless blessings if they remember Allah, the Exalted, at this time.

All muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, advises that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the voluntary night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, it helps a person to stay away from pointless social gatherings and it protects a person from many physical illnesses. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the voluntary night prayer by not over eating or drinking especially, before bed, as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themselves out during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should avoid sins and strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

Finally, the main Hadith also indicates the importance of never giving up hope as the door to repentance and success is always open. People are given opportunity every day and night to return to sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, so that they can find peace and success in both worlds. One should appreciate the great mercy Allah, the Exalted, shows, as He is not in need of the creation yet invites them to Himself so that they can succeed. One must take these opportunities before their time runs out and they are left with nothing except regrets.

Strengthening Faith - 34

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt, then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve peace and success in both worldly and religious matters. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

On the other hand, when one abandons learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, they will adopt the bad characteristics which are advocated by society, social media, culture and fashion. These bad characteristics will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This in turn leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

And chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

"The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allāh with a sound heart."

Strengthening Faith - 35

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the five obligatory prayers erase one's sins just like taking a bath five times a day would clean the body from dirt.

The first thing to note is that this Hadith refers to minor sins only, as major sins require sincere repentance. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and those who have been wronged, as long as this does not lead to further problems, promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

In addition, it is important for muslims to not only purify their outer beings of minor sins, by establishing the five obligatory prayers, but also fulfill the other aspect of purification namely, inner purification. This is indicated by the fact that the five obligatory prayers were spread across the day instead of being put together. Meaning, a muslim should repeatedly inwardly turn to Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day just like their body turns to Allah, the Exalted, five times a day through the obligatory prayers. This inner purification involves correcting one's intention so that they only perform actions in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This is the foundation of Islam and is what Allah, the Exalted, assesses when judging an action. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Those who act for the sake of other people will be told to gain their reward from them on Judgment Day,

which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Finally, this inner purification includes learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that one removes the bad characteristics they possess, such as envy, and instead adopts good characteristics, such as patience. The outer purification is important but if a muslim desires to achieve success and overcome all difficulties in both worlds they must purify their inner being as well as their outer being. Inner purification will ensure one speaks and acts in the correct way. It will ensure they use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It will ensure they fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

On the other hand, avoiding inner purification will prevent one from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, even if they fulfill the basic obligatory duties of Islam. It will hinder them from fulfilling all the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and especially the rights of people. This will lead to a difficult and stressful life in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

Strengthening Faith - 36

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4119, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best people are those who remind others of Allah, the Exalted, when they are observed.

This does not refer to those who adopt an Islamic outward appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf, as many of these people do not remind others of Allah, the Exalted, at all. This Hadith refers to those who learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the purification of one's heart which leads to the purification of their outward limbs. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984. This will cause others to remember Allah, the Exalted, when they observe the actions of these righteous muslims, as they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of in ways pleasing to themselves and others. And this remembrance will only increase when these righteous muslims speak, as they only speak in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they avoid evil and vain speech and only speak on beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. They love, dislike, give and withhold only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Strengthening Faith - 37

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned of behaving cowardly. This attitude prevents trust in Allah, the Exalted, and in what He has promised, such as one's guaranteed provision. It can cause one to seek their provision in doubtful and unlawful means, which will destroy a person in both worlds. Allah, the Exalted, does not accept any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Just like the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention, similarly the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful.

In addition, being a coward prevents one from striving against the Devil and one's inner Devil which requires genuine struggle. This will lead one to fail in obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And it will therefore prevent them from fulfilling the rights of people. Both worldly and religious success requires effort and time. A coward will be too afraid to undertake this struggle and will instead be lazy which leads to failure in both worldly and religious matters.

In addition, a coward will easily claim they are trying their best in obeying Allah, the Exalted, while they are hardly putting in any effort. They claim this even though the Holy Quran makes it clear that if a person tries their best and acts according to their potential they will correctly fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. This is because Allah, the

Exalted, never gives duties to a person which are beyond their capacity to fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."

Cowardice will also encourage one to aim for the minimum in both religious and worldly matters. They will refrain from fulfilling their potential, as this requires genuine effort. This attitude will only lead to stress and regrets in both worlds.

Strengthening Faith - 38

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1999, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves beauty.

Islam does not prohibit a muslim from dedicating energy, time and money in beautifying themselves, as this can be considered fulfilling the rights of their body. This has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5199. But the key thing which differentiates acting in this manner to acting in a disliked or even sinful manner is when one is excessive, wasteful or extravagant when beautifying themselves. A good way to determine this is that beautifying oneself should never cause one to neglect fulfilling one's duty to Allah, the Exalted, or people, which is not possible to fulfill without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Nor should beautifying oneself prevent them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. And in reality correcting one's physical appearance so that they appear clean and smart is not expensive nor does it take much time or effort.

This beautifying attitude applies to all things, such as one's home. As long as one avoids extravagance and waste and continues to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they are free to make things comfortable for themselves in a moderate manner.

In addition, it is more important to understand that true beauty which Allah, the Exalted, loves is connected to internal beauty meaning, one's character. This beauty will endure in both worlds whereas one's outer beauty will eventually fade away with the passing of time. One should therefore prioritize obtaining this true beauty over external beauty by striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they eliminate any bad traits, such as envy, from their character and adopt good characteristics, such as generosity. This will aid one in fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and will aid them in fulfilling the rights of people, which includes treating others in a way one wishes people to treat them.

Strengthening Faith - 39

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2347, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that his true friend is the one who possesses the following characteristics.

One of these characteristics is that they have a good share in the prayer. This means they establish their obligatory prayers by fulfilling them correctly with all their conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. This also includes establishing the voluntary prayers which are based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the voluntary night prayer. This is in fact the best prayer after the obligatory prayers according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614. A good share in the prayer also includes offering the obligatory prayers with the congregation at a Mosque when possible. It is sad to see how many Muslims live in proximity of a Mosque yet still do not join the congregation, even when they are free from work.

The next thing characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in public and in private. Doing so in private indicates a person's sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they only perform righteous deeds for His sake. This is the one who firmly remembers that no matter where they are, the inner and outer aspects of their being is constantly being observed by Allah, the Exalted. If one persists on this belief they will adopt excellence of faith, which is

mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. It means they act, such as performing the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, watching them. This attitude encourages righteous deeds and prevents sins.

Strengthening Faith - 40

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2736, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever knows the ninety nine names of Allah, the Exalted, will enter Paradise.

Knowing does not only refer to memorizing them. It actually means to study them and act on them according to one's status and potential. For example, Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favors on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”

When used in reference to the creation, merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, is All Forgiving according to His infinite status. And adopting this attribute by forgiving others, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is something which has been encouraged in Islam. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

So the divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, can be adopted by muslims according to their status and potential.

Therefore, muslims must first understand the meaning of the divine attributes and names and then adopt the meaning of the names in their character through action, until they become firmly rooted into their spiritual heart so that they can achieve noble character. This noble character will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Strengthening Faith - 41

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

With the rise of mental problems and disorders, such as depression, it is vital for muslims to understand the importance of this declaration. There is a small chance of a person experiencing a mental issue when they are constantly surrounded and aided by someone that truly loves them. If this is true for a person it is undoubtedly more befitting for Allah, the Exalted, who has promised to be with the one who remembers Him. Acting on this declaration alone would eliminate mental issues, such as depression. It is the reason why being secluded from others or being amongst others did not affect the mental state of the righteous predecessors as they were always in the company of Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious that when one obtains the company of Allah, the Exalted, they will overcome all obstacles and difficulties successfully until they reach His proximity in the hereafter.

In addition, out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, has not restricted this declaration in any way. For example, He did not declare He was only with the righteous or with those who perform specific good deeds. He in fact, encompassed every muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith or how many sins they have committed. Therefore, a muslim should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note the condition mentioned in this Hadith namely, to remember Allah, the Exalted. This remembrance includes correcting one's intention so that they only act to please Allah, the Exalted, and therefore do not expect nor hope for any gratitude from people.

Remembrance with the tongue involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. And the highest level of remembrance is to use the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be blessed with the company and support of Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, the more one obeys and remembers Allah, the Exalted, the more they will receive His company. What one gives is what they shall receive.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that whoever remembers Allah, the Exalted, privately will be remembered by Him privately. And whoever remembers Allah, the Exalted, publicly meaning, in a gathering, will be remembered by Allah, the Exalted, in a better gathering meaning, amongst the Heavenly Angels.

This like many other examples found within the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicates a basic teaching of Islam namely, what one gives is what they shall receive. Another example, which confirms this Hadith is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“So remember Me; I will remember you...”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that the one who shows mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by the Creator. Generally speaking, in this material world a person receives things according to their efforts. Yet, strangely some expect to obtain the high ranks of Paradise without any effort. These teachings clearly show that a muslim will receive blessings and mercy based on their efforts. The more obedient they are to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, the more they will receive in return. There is no doubt that Allah, the Exalted, can give whatever He wants to whomever He wants irrespective of how much or little they strive in His obedience but Allah, the Exalted, has set up a system which must be followed namely, striving in His obedience in order to obtain more blessings and mercy. Therefore, each muslim must reflect and decide how much mercy and blessings of Allah, the Exalted, they desire and then strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, accordingly.

This reality is clearly described in the final part of this Hadith where Allah, the Exalted, indicates that the more one strives in achieving His proximity, through His sincere obedience, the more of His mercy they shall receive.

Strengthening Faith - 42

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that there are two blessings people often do not appreciate until they lose them namely, good health and free time.

Good health is a special blessing as it allows a person to take advantage of gaining other blessings related to the world and religion. One of the wisdoms behind minor illnesses is that they should inspire a muslim to be grateful for good health. True gratitude is when one uses the blessings they possess, in this case good health, in the correct way as prescribed by Islam. One should observe those who have lost their good health either through sickness or through ageing and therefore make use of the good health they possess by striving to gain success in worldly and religious matters while giving priority to religion over the material world. For example, one should use their good health to journey to the Mosques in order to offer their prayers with congregation before a time comes when they desire to do this but do not possess the physical strength to do so. They should keep voluntary fasts, especially during the short days of winter, before they lose their good health. They should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer regularly, as it is the best voluntary prayer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614.

The amazing thing about utilizing one's health correctly is that when they eventually lose it, Allah, the Exalted, will continue to grant them the same reward they used to receive when doing good deeds during their good health. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's,

Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who live in heedlessness will fail to utilize their good health and therefore receive no reward during their good health or when they fall sick.

One aspect of appreciating and showing true gratitude for good health is to help those who have lost their good health according to one's means, such as emotional or financial help. It is important to regularly ponder over the sick, as this will inspire one to use their good health correctly.

Finally, those who utilize their good health correctly will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, during their periods of sickness. Whereas, those who do not, will not receive this support and will therefore become impatient when facing sickness. This negative attitude will only lead to further trouble for them and cause them to lose out on much reward.

Everything in this material can be bought, even through illegal means, except time. It is the single blessing which does not return after it leaves a person. Even though this reality is not denied by anyone irrespective of their faith yet, many muslims do not appreciate and make good use of the time they have been given. Many have adopted the mentality that they will prepare for the hereafter tomorrow. But as each day passes this tomorrow keeps getting delayed until, in many cases, this tomorrow never comes. And they only realize this tomorrow when it is too late meaning, at the time of their death. Those who are fortunate enough to reach this tomorrow during their lives may inhabit the Mosques when they reach elderly age but as they have dedicated so much time and energy to the material world their bodies might be in Mosques yet, their hearts and tongues are still engrossed in the material world. This is obvious to those who regularly attend Mosques. These muslims are

unlikely to learn and act on Islamic teachings because of their elderly age and their worldly mentalities. So they may attend the Mosques yet continue to misuse the blessings they have been granted.

In addition, with the passing of time, in most cases, one's responsibilities only increase, such as marriage and raising children. So delaying preparing for the hereafter until one is supposedly more free is simply foolish. Islam does not teach muslims to abandon the world but it does encourage them to make correct use of their time, by taking enough from the material world in order to fulfil their necessitates and responsibilities without extravagance or waste and then dedicate the rest of their efforts to preparing for the permanent hereafter. They should minimize using their time on sinful and vain things, things which will not benefit them in this world or the next, and dedicate more of their time and resources to those things which will benefit them in both worlds. This is how one uses their time correctly. How many muslims can honestly say they dedicate the majority of their efforts to preparing for the eternal hereafter over beautifying their temporal world?

Strengthening Faith - 43

In a long Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described some important deeds which muslims must strive to perform. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, described fasting as a shield. In another Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1639, he explains this further by advising that fasting is a shield against fire just like a shield protects a person in a fight.

This could mean that fasting is a protection against the fire of difficulties one faces in this world and the fire of Hell they will encounter in the next. In addition, fasting is a shield against the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, as the Holy Quran has declared fasting a means to obtaining righteousness and an aspect of this is refraining from the disobedience Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.”

But it is important to note, fasting acts as a shield as long as one does not damage their fast through evil speech or actions. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2235. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned the fasting person not to behave indecently or quarrel with others in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1894.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 707, that Allah, the Exalted, does not desire one to leave their food and drink if they fail to abstain from foul speech and actions. This behaviour clearly contradicts the aim of fasting. In reality, a fast should affect every organ of one's body, not just their stomach, by safeguarding them from sins.

A muslim should therefore fulfil all the etiquettes and conditions of a fast by fulfilling their duties and abstaining from sins so that they can implement this behaviour all year round, even when they are not fasting. This is a real fast which leads to piety and a protection from the difficulties of this world and the fire of Hell in the next.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith highlights the importance of the voluntary night prayer. This Hadith indicates that it erases sins just like charity does.

The voluntary night prayer has countless virtues for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, declares that it is the best voluntary prayer. The night is when Allah, the Exalted, descends to the Heavens of this world, according to His infinite dignity, and invites people towards His forgiveness and mercy. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6321.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the night prayer. This shows that those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Qurān] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”

All muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, as it helps them to avoid pointless social gatherings and it protects one from many physical illnesses also. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the night prayer by not over eating or drinking, especially before bed, as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themselves during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing

destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the central pillar of Islam is establishing the obligatory prayers.

Establishing the obligatory prayers means to fulfil all its etiquettes and conditions correctly, such as offering them on time. It is the most important obligatory duty on each muslim and without it success in this world or the next is virtually unobtainable. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the one found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618. It clearly warns that establishing the prayers separates belief from disbelief. Those who fail to establish the prayers are at risk of leaving this world without their faith, which is the greatest loss. As Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a person beyond their limits, no muslim has an excuse for not establishing their prayers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”

Failing to establish the obligatory prayers while claiming to try one's best contradicts this truth. And there is no doubt that the Holy Quran is the truth.

As the obligatory prayers are the central pillar of Islam, it indicates that if one fails to establish them their house of Islam will collapse, irrespective of what other good deeds they do. The obligatory prayers cannot be replaced by any other deed or internal belief. In fact, the obligatory prayers are the most important practical proof of one's internal belief. Without this practical proof one is unlikely to obtain success in this world or the next. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 14:

"...establish prayer for My remembrance."

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Strengthening Faith - 44

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the verse of the Holy Quran found in chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A Muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A Muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a Muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the

more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

Strengthening Faith - 45

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, and what made them the best group ever created after the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The fact they physically observed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime is definitely one factor. But anyone who knows about their life and their righteous deeds understands that their superiority is due to more than just this unique and great deed.

One of the main reasons for their superiority is shown in a Hadith involving the Companion Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, which is found in Sahih Muslim, number 6515. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was once riding on his conveyance in the desert when he came across a Bedouin. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, greeted the Bedouin, placed his turban on the Bedouin's head and insisted that the Bedouin ride on his conveyance. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was told that the greeting he gave the Bedouin was more than enough as the Bedouin would have been greatly pleased at the fact that the great Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with him, greeted him. Yet, Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, went much further than this and showed the Bedouin great respect. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he only did this because the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that one of the best ways a person can honour their parent is by showing love and respect to their parent's relatives and friends. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, added that the Bedouin's father was a friend of his father

the Commander of the Faithful, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him.

This incident indicates the superiority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They completely submitted to the teachings of Islam. They not only fulfilled the obligatory duties and avoided all sins but completely fulfilled all acts which were recommended to them to the highest possible degree. Their submission caused them to put aside their own desires and only act to please Allah, the Exalted. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily ignored the Bedouin as none of the actions he done were obligatory yet, unlike many Muslims who would use this excuse, he completely submitted to the teachings of Islam and acted the way he did.

It is the lack of submission to the teachings of Islam which has weakened the faith of Muslims. Some only fulfil the obligatory duties and turn away from other righteous deeds, such as voluntary charity, which contradict their desires by claiming the actions are not obligatory. All Muslims desire to end up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. But how is this possible if they do not follow their path or way? If a Muslim follows a path other than theirs then how can they end up with them? To end up with them one must follow their path. But this is only possible if one completely submits to the teachings of Islam like they did instead of cherry picking the deeds which suit their desires.

Strengthening Faith - 46

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the following verse of the Holy Quran: Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”

All Muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all Muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a Muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the

Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some Muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-Muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the Muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise.

Strengthening Faith - 47

I had a thought which I wanted to share. There are many Muslims who desire lawful things, such as a child and instead of being content with what Allah, the Exalted, chose for them they instead pursue their desires in lawful ways such as spiritual exercises based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is obviously permissible in Islam. Yet, after all this effort and stress they do not understand nor act on a simple but profound teaching of Islam which would aid them in their quest. In fact, they often act in certain ways which only reduces the chances of their request being fulfilled. For example, a Muslim does not need to be a scholar to understand that it is less likely for a Muslim to obtain what they desire if the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed from them. For Example, this can occur when one lies in order to make others laugh. In fact, this person has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315. A curse results in the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Some of these Muslims who desperately desire things from Allah, the Exalted, also backbite and slander others. This also leads to the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

“Woe to every slanderer and backbiter.”

There are many other examples which lead to the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which in turn dramatically reduces the chances of one's request being fulfilled. Muslims should therefore act on this important

principle by seeking and acting on knowledge before seeking other means such as spiritual exercises in order to fulfil their lawful desires as these things will not aid them in fulfilling their requests until they correct their behaviour.

Strengthening Faith - 48

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a powerful weapon and trap of the Devil which can affect every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith. The Devil tries to convince Muslims to always observe those who are worse than them in behaviour in order to justify their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and improving their character and behaviour for the better. For example, a Muslim who offers their obligatory prayers once in a while will observe someone who does not pray at all in order to make themselves feel better. A thief will look at a murderer and convince themselves stealing is not so bad. The examples are endless. It is very strange how these Muslims so easily observe those who appear worse than them in order to justify their lack of effort in obeying Allah, the Exalted, but these same people will not observe those who are in a worse off position than them when they face difficulties. For example, the person who suffers from back pain will not observe the one who is physically disabled so that it prevents them from complaining. This attitude has specifically been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In addition, if observing those who appear worse in their behaviour does not save one from punishment in a worldly court, such as a thief being pardoned by a judge because there are many murderers in the world, how can one imagine this excuse will hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted?

Muslims should therefore avoid this trap of the Devil by observing those who appear better than them so that they are inspired to improve their character and behaviour progressively for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This is what Allah, the Exalted, demands meaning, He does not demand perfection.

Strengthening Faith - 49

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often question how they can mould their life to fit their faith instead of moulding their faith in order to fit their worldly life. One of the ways of achieving this is by always performing the obligatory prayers as soon as they occur for women and to offer the obligatory prayers at the Mosques for men. As establishing the prayers is the main pillar of Islam, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616, when one performs it as described it forces them to arrange their worldly activities so that they fit around their obligatory prayers. Whereas, when one either offers their obligatory prayers late or at home instead of the Mosque it becomes easy to fit the obligatory prayers around one's worldly time table which in turn causes them to mould their faith around their worldly life. The correct attitude will also prevent one from indulging in unnecessary and vain activities, such as visiting the shopping centres unnecessarily, as these often prevent a Muslim from offering their obligatory prayers on time or at the Mosque. Avoiding these unnecessary things and activities allows one to mould their life around their religion.

In addition, as offering the obligatory prayers on time is one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 611, a Muslim should adhere to this habit and not postpone offering their obligatory prayers without an extremely good reason which only occurs very rarely. If one desires to mould their life around their faith then they must fulfil their obligatory prayers on time as soon as they happen for women and men should fulfil them at the Mosque

with congregation. This will ensure they prioritise preparing for the hereafter without becoming distracted by the excess of this material world.

Strengthening Faith - 50

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often have periods within their lives where they exert themselves by increasing the amount of worship they perform. This often happens in the Holy month of Ramadan where Muslims decide to change their lives around by striving much harder than normal. The issue with exerting too much effort in a short period of time is that it often leads to one giving up and returning back to normal. First of all, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned Muslims in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 43, not to over burden themselves and only perform voluntary deeds which they can handle. He concluded by declaring that the most beloved of deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are the ones done regularly irrespective of their size. Muslims should therefore adhere to this advice as it is more likely they keep up their obedience over a longer period of time.

In reality, the important time is not the period where one feels a spiritual high and exerts extra effort. The important time is when one returns back to normal as spiritual highs very rarely last. Muslims must ensure that no matter how much they return from a spiritual high they must continue fulfilling their obligatory duties. Then they should dedicate some time to learning and acting on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Changing step by step like this is much better than exerting extra effort over a short period of time and there is a greater chance that one will maintain their improved obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the long term if they change gradually, step by step. No one is demanding Muslims to become saints overnight. Improvement takes time but this means that one should not stand still and actually take small but regular steps to improve their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by

fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Strengthening Faith - 51

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important to understand that no matter how much religious knowledge one obtains or how much worship and righteous deeds they perform they will never be safe from the attacks and traps of the Devil. This is because the Devil attacks each person according to how much knowledge they possess and how much righteous deeds they perform. For example, he will try to convince the Muslim who is strict in offering their obligatory prayers not to offer them in congregation at the Mosque or by convincing them to delay their obligatory prayers beyond their starting times as he knows he will not be able to convince them to completely abandon the obligatory prayers. Whereas, in respect to the Muslim who is struggling to establish their obligatory prayers he will attempt to convince them that they are too difficult to establish therefore they should only offer them when they are completely free. He tries to convince those who perform many voluntary righteous deeds not to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to improve their character so that they continue to destroy their good deeds through bad characteristics such as, lying and backbiting.

The Devil aims to prevent a person from reaching a higher level if he cannot convince them to fall in rank through disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims should always be on guard against his attacks and traps by persistently striving to increase in rank, improve their character and avoid acts of disobedience which is all achieved by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Strengthening Faith - 52

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Even though the number of Muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of Muslims has only decreased. Each Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief Muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must

return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

Strengthening Faith - 53

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Unfortunately, some Muslims have adopted a weak characteristic which only hinders them from improving for the better. Namely, they compare their situation and circumstances to others who are facing easier circumstances and use this as an excuse not to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, a person who works full time excuses their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by comparing themselves to someone who works part time and simply claims it is easier for them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, as they have more free time. Or a poorer Muslim turns away from giving any form of charity by observing those who possess more wealth and claims that the wealthy person can more easily give charity than them. They fail to understand that these excuses may make their souls feel better but it does not aid them in this world or in the next. Allah, the Exalted, does not desire people to act according to the means of others. He only desires people to act in His obedience according to their own means. For example, a person who works full time can dedicate whatever free time they possess in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even if that is less than someone who works part time. In this respect what the part timer does has no effect on the one who works full time so using them as an excuse not to strive harder is simply a lame excuse. The poor Muslim should simply donate according to their means even if that is much less than the wealthy person as Allah, the Exalted, will judge them on what they do and He will not judge them according to what other Muslims do.

Muslims should give up these useless excuses and simply obey Allah, the Exalted, according to their own means.

Strengthening Faith - 54

I had a thought which I wanted to share. If a person was hired for a specific job, such as painting a house, they are highly unlikely to receive their wages if they decide to do another duty, such as hoovering the house. Even though what they decided to do is not bad but as they have chosen to do a job they were not hired for they will undoubtedly displease their employer. This is simple to understand and accept. Similarly, a Muslim has been commanded to fulfill the commands set out in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but if they decide to do something else and neglect this duty irrespective of if the thing they decide to do is lawful, such as pursuing the excess of this material world beyond their needs, doing actions which are different from what have been prescribed in the two divine sources or simply unlawful they should not expect to please Allah, the Exalted, as He has made it clear what Muslims should be doing. The same way an employee who decides to do something different should not expect to receive their wages neither should a Muslim who decides to strive for anything other than what they have been told to strive for by Allah, the Exalted. The wages in the case of the Muslim include blessings, mercy and the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Simply put, if a Muslim desires to obtain these wages they must do their job and not busy themselves with other things which either contradicts their duty or things which are different from their duty.

Strengthening Faith - 55

I had a thought which I wanted to share. There are many Muslims who dedicate much of their time, effort and wealth on things which are neither righteous deeds nor sins meaning, they are vain things. Vain things can also include acquiring unnecessary things, such as beautifying one's home beyond their necessities. Even though, they might be correct in their claim that they are not committing sins it is important to understand a fact. Namely, time is a precious gift from Allah, the Exalted, which cannot be gained once it departs. All other things can be acquired, such as wealth, all other things except time. So when one dedicates their time as well as other blessings such as wealth to unnecessary and extra things meaning, vain things, it will only lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. This will occur when they observe the reward given to those who made use of their time and performed righteous deeds. Time wasters may have avoided sins which save them from punishment but as they wasted time on vain things they may face criticism. And they will surely lose out on the reward they could have gained if they utilised their time and other blessings correctly.

In addition, it is important to understand that the more one indulges in vain things the closer they are to falling into extravagance and waste both of which are blame worthy. For example, those who waste blessings are considered the siblings of the Devil. And it can be argued when one dedicates their time to vain things they have in fact wasted the precious blessing of time. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils...”

Strengthening Faith - 56

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the following verse of the Holy Quran: chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 38:

“...And Satan had made pleasing to them their deeds and averted them from the path...”

As mentioned in this verse the Devil fools people into committing sins and making wrong decisions by beautifying the incorrect choice for them. This occurs in situations when a person must make a choice between two or more options. It also occurs when the choice is between the lawful and unlawful and even between two lawful options. If the Devil cannot guide someone to a sin then he attempts to guide them to the inferior option, even if it is lawful, hoping it will lead to some sort of a sin, such as a person complaining about life and destiny. The Devil beautifies a choice by causing one to focus on its apparent benefit to such a degree that they lose focus on the bigger picture and the consequences of the choice. An adult then behaves like a child who makes choices without reflecting over the consequences of their actions. This is one of the main reasons why people commit sins. In reality, if one truly reflected on the punishment of sins they would never commit them.

Something which helps in situations like this is to mentally take a step back and assess the options by comparing their long-term benefits and harms. Only when the lawful benefits of something outweighs the harm should a person proceed. The other thing which helps is to deeply reflect on the consequences of the potential options. Some choices might be lawful but if one goes ahead with them it may make their life difficult in the long run. For example, sometimes people rush into marriage with someone they apparently love. They base their decision solely on their feelings instead of reflecting on other more important aspects, for example, if their potential future spouse will make a good life partner or a good parent and if they will help them in their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Many marriages have ended in divorce because the couple did not reflect on the long term implications of a potential marriage. Many people often claim their spouse was very different before they got married but in most cases they have not changed at all. The truth is that before marriage they did not spend so much time with them so they did not observe certain characteristics which became obvious after marriage.

Some often rush into action and later have regrets as their choice caused them more trouble and in many cases the issue was not a big deal in the first place. This type of action can only be avoided when one reflects on the situation and observes the bigger picture meaning, the wider and long-term implications and consequences of taking a step forward.

One should not only assess if something is lawful or unlawful before making a decision. Even though, this is the most important thing to consider yet, it is not the only thing. As many lawful incorrect choices, which are beautified by the Devil, can lead to trouble further on in life.

To sum up, before making any choice a person must take a step back and reflect deeply over its lawfulness and its potential long-term benefits and harms under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever acts like this will rarely make a wrong choice they later regret.

Strengthening Faith - 57

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the fact that every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

Strengthening Faith - 58

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice Muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and

religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

Strengthening Faith - 59

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is commonly observed that in the special days and nights of the Islamic year, such as the night of power, which is considered to be on the 27th night of the Islamic month of Ramadan according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1386, Muslims come out in droves and inhabit the Mosques or pray more at home. Even though, this is a good thing it is important to understand that a Muslim should not only behave in this manner on the special days and nights of the Islamic year. They should instead respect each day and night throughout the whole year by fulfilling their duties in them without neglect. They should never believe the worship of one day or night in the year will make up for their neglect of the rest of year as this is completely untrue and a trick of the Devil. Being a Muslim is a 24/7 duty it is not a duty which extends only on certain days and nights. Meaning, a Muslim must fulfil their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions, face destiny with patience and fulfil the rights of people every day of their life according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Cherry picking certain days and nights is a major reason why Muslims feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, as they only turn to Him occasionally. The truth is simple, what Muslims dedicate to Allah, the Exalted, is what they will receive in return. If they only dedicate a few days or nights in the year to Him then they should not expect a great return. Islam does not demand one to pray all night instead it demands Muslims to fulfil their obligatory duties and as much of the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as possible. This does not take much time up and leaves one with plenty of time to do other things as well.

In reality, the one who does not respect every day and night by fulfilling their duties in them will find that even the special days and nights are just ordinary days and nights for them. But the one who respects every day and night will find that every day and night is like the special days and nights, like the night of power, for them. Meaning, Allah, the Exalted, will bless them just like He blesses them on the special days and nights in the Islamic year.

Strengthening Faith - 60

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the issue of widespread corruption and how it has infected every social level in most countries. Widespread corruption is quite evident and needs know deep investigation or research to prove its existence. In some cases it occurs out in the open.

One of the reasons corruption spreads throughout society, to the point that even top government officials are involved in it, is a direct result of the general public becoming corrupt. When ordinary people mistreat others, through physical or financial means, thereby disobeying Allah, the Exalted, believing no one can hold them accountable, then as a punishment, Allah, the Exalted, appoints them corrupt leaders and government officials. Meaning, how one acts is how they are treated. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, that when the general public cheat each other financially, Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing them oppressive leaders. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will confiscate their wealth and property. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences.

When the general public becomes corrupt, then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way, believing that this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, by not mistreating others through corruption, then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way, full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption, muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude. Otherwise, corruption in society will only increase with time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As explained earlier, corruption occurs because of the behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”

Strengthening Faith - 61

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a person who did not respect their national anthem, which was labelled unpatriotic by some. In reality, a true patriot to Allah, the Exalted, and one's nation is not refusing to stand during a national anthem or saluting a flag. A true patriot is the one who supports others, such as their government, in things which are beneficial and praiseworthy in respect to Islam, irrespective of who is organising or responsible for it. And who constructively criticises others, such as their government, when they do something blame worthy in the sight of Islam, irrespective of who orchestrated it. This criticism must be constructive within the limits of the law while avoiding all forms of vain or vulgar speech and actions. It should never lead to rebellion, as this only leads to the harm of innocent people, which history has clearly shown time and time again.

It is important to note, that each muslim can behave in this manner, even if they are not in a position of political or social influence. Each person can behave like a true patriot in respect to others, especially their relatives, by behaving in the manner outlined earlier meaning, supporting good and kindly forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

If each family unit behaved in such a manner, it would undoubtedly affect each town, city and eventually the nation, until a true improvement occurs, which in turn benefits all irrespective of their faith. This good intention and supporting it with sincere actions to improve a nation in this way, is true patriotism. Everything else is only a meaningless show. This is how one makes a country truly great again.

Strengthening Faith - 62

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a celebrity and how they earned and spent their wealth. The Holy Quran has labelled those who are wasteful as the siblings of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful.”

The comparison has been made to the Devil for several reasons. First of all, the people who spend wealth excessively on unnecessary things often do so in haste without thinking things through meaning, an impulsive spender. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that being hasty is from the Devil while thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted. If a muslim truly pondered over what they desired to purchase, they would not spend on unnecessary and extravagant things as this is not a sign of a true muslim.

In addition, when one spends on unnecessary and extravagant things, they in most cases, are only fuelling the companies who make a profit by distracting people from right guidance, such as the entertainment industry, which is the Devil's main and ultimate goal.

Spending wastefully always distracts one from preparing for the hereafter, as this person dedicates much time to earning wealth, spending it wastefully and enjoying what they acquired. Distracting a muslim from preparing for the hereafter is another goal of the Devil. Preparing for the hereafter involves using the blessings one has been granted, such as wealth, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Finally, the verse quoted earlier specifically mentions the ingratitude of the Devil. In reality, the one who spends wastefully on unnecessary things does so because they too are ungrateful over what they already possess. If they possessed true gratitude, it would prevent them from acting in this manner. Islam does not prohibit one from spending on necessary things, it in fact, encourages muslims to do so. And even spending on lawful unnecessary things is acceptable, if it is done occasionally and without extravagance, as this is something which is disliked by Allah, the Exalted, and leads to wasting wealth. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 141:

“...And be not excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess.”

Strengthening Faith

Strengthening Faith - 63

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to discuss. It reported on the importance of learning from the past.

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason, even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are facing times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle, as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur, thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties, thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

“In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations, as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness, or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation, whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message, a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

Strengthening Faith - 64

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on taking a step back in order to assess what is truly beneficial and harmful in one's life. When a muslim observes the teachings of Islam they will find that certain worldly blessings have been described in a positive way but in other places it has been described in a negative way. This is because in reality most things are not innately good or bad. What makes them good or bad is whether they take one towards the obedience and pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, or not. For example, the Holy Quran has described a spouse as a way of finding tranquillity, mercy and affection. Chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 21:

“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy...”

But the same Holy Quran has also warned that a spouse and children can be enemies to a muslim as well. Chapter 64 At Taghabun, verse 14:

“O you who have believed, indeed, among your spouses and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them...”

This indicates that they become a source of tranquillity when they encourage one towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But one's family can become an enemy to them if they divert them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

So muslims should regularly assess and judge the worldly blessings they possess in order to determine whether they encourage them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, or divert them from it. And if necessary take steps in order to benefit themselves in both worlds. Whoever does this self-assessment regularly will find that they continue to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn will ensure they find peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if they fail to do this self-assessment, they will inevitably misuse the blessings they have been granted which will lead to a difficult life in this world and a strict accountability and a potential severe punishment on a Great Day. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

"Say, "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command.""

Strengthening Faith - 65

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the Corona Virus and the precautions the public should take in order to keep themselves safe from it. It is amazing how these steps which non Islamic nations are trying to implement now were advised by the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, over 1400 years ago. For example, people are being advised to wash their hands regularly throughout the day whereas, Islam advises a muslim to wash their hands, arms, faces and feet, five times a day which is required to offer the obligatory prayer. In fact, a Hadith found in Imam Malik's, Muwatta, Book 2, Hadith number 37, advises that a true believer maintains the state of ablution throughout the day. Meaning, they not only wash these parts of the body for the five obligatory prayers but do so every time they use the toilet in order to remain in ablution throughout the day. In addition, muslims have been advised to wash their hands before and after meals. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 258. They have been advised to wash their hands before going to bed and after waking up from sleep. This has been advised in Hadiths found in Sunan Ibn Majah, numbers 3297 and 394. Put simply, people have been advised to maintain good hygiene and Islam has declared cleanliness to be half of faith in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 223.

In addition, people have been advised to avoid going out in public unnecessarily, which has been advised by Islam so long ago, as it often leads to vain and sinful things. In fact, this is an element of salvation according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2406.

People have been warned not to unnecessarily socialize with others. Islam has encompassed this teaching by declaring one should either speak good or remain silent in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3971, which indicates limiting socializing with others.

Finally, it has been stressed that people should support each other, such as food supplies, through this difficulty but Islam has been teaching the importance of this for over a millennium. For example, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, advises that Allah, the Exalted, will aid the one who supports others.

To conclude, Muslims should implement these teachings in order to show the true face of Islam to the world.

Strengthening Faith - 66

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the behaviour and attitude of some criminals who chose a life of crime, as they desired to obtain wealth in an easy and simple way.

It is important for muslims to avoid this type of quick fix mentality in both worldly and religious matters. Unfortunately, some muslims have adopted this attitude. Whenever they encounter problems, instead of following the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by remaining patient and firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, they instead search for a quick fix solution, desiring a short spiritual exercise which can solve all their problems. This was not the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, even though they faced more severe difficulties. Allah, the Exalted, could have granted the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, victory and spread Islam in a single moment, yet it took over two decades of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, to achieve this. A muslim should simply understand that if they cannot lawfully obtain worldly things without effort how can they obtain religious blessings without effort? The greatest spiritual exercise one can perform is remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. There is no quick fix to problems, as the universe was created in such a way that one must put in effort in order to obtain things. If a muslim desires to overcome difficulties and obtain

blessings they must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Strengthening Faith - 67

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on discovering new things and experiences. Some muslims have adopted a mentality whereby they are always trying to discover different things and teachings in respect to Islam. They purposely seek lectures and knowledge which is supposedly new and different from what they have already experienced. Even though, this is not an evil characteristic, it is an attitude which can lead to misguidance. This can occur when one fails to act on the knowledge they already have heard and studied, yet strive to experience new Islamic information and knowledge. Simply put, if a muslim has failed to understand and act on what they already know, how can learning new things benefit them? Acting on what one has already listened to and studied, is the very reason why the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, often repeat key pieces of information. For example, Allah, the Exalted, only needed to command muslims to establish their prayers once, yet He has done it many times throughout the Holy Quran. The same way a student cannot progress to the next level or academic year without acting on the knowledge they have already studied, a muslim will not be able to progress towards the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, unless they act on the knowledge they already possess, even if they search and listen to new things. Some foolishly seek knowledge connected to higher levels of piety without even acting on the basic principles of faith such as, refraining from lying and backbiting.

In addition, searching for new knowledge also encourages one to obtain knowledge which is not beneficial as it does not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has

been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Nor is this different knowledge connected to something which Allah, the Exalted, will ask them about on Judgement Day. This is why it is vital for muslims to concentrate on gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as it will increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and this knowledge is connected to things which will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of people.

The Holy Quran has made it clear that revising important information one already possesses is beneficial and the correct attitude, as this person is more likely to act on their knowledge than the one who only seeks new knowledge. In fact, this attitude benefits the believers. Therefore, if one does not obtain benefit from being reminded about things they already know, then they must reassess their faith. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 55:

“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

Strengthening Faith - 68

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the problems which are occurring in the middle east and how countless people are suffering. It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess, as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person, they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication on their behalf, but they should also reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person, they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day, which is unknown to them, they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave, so will they too be left to face their grave with only their deeds for company. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Ale Imran, verse 191:

"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless, which will prevent them from improving their behaviour towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

Strengthening Faith - 69

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the concept of a midlife crisis. A person who experiences this often questions their purpose and seems to feel a huge void in their life, even though they may possess many things and achieved much worldly success. This often occurs as these people are not fulfilling the purpose of their creation which is to gain knowledge about Allah, the Exalted, so that they can obey and worship Him correctly. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me.”

This is similar to a person who owns the latest mobile phone which has many features, yet due to a fault it fails to fulfil its primary goal, which is to make phone calls. No matter how good these other features are, the owner will always feel a void in respect to it, as the phone does not fulfil its primary goal of existence. Similarly, a person will feel a void in their life even if they possess many worldly things. This feeling affects muslims and non-muslims. It is obvious why non-muslims feel like this, as they could not be further from fulfilling the purpose of their creation. So no matter what they achieve, they eventually feel this void in their life. It occurs to those muslims who may even fulfil their obligatory duties but as they fail to strive to gain and act on the vital knowledge needed to fulfil their purpose

correctly, they experience this void. In most cases, they do not even understand the Arabic language, so performing worship simply does not fill this void. One will not fill this void until they strive to fulfil the purpose of creation which is to gain knowledge on Allah, the Exalted, so that they can use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him throughout every moment of their life.

Strengthening Faith - 70

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a large scale project and how things were not going according to the initial plan, such as the estimated cost of the project increasing dramatically.

Muslims should understand that making long term worldly plans is not the wisest decision, as these things very rarely work out as planned. One only needs to reflect on their own life and their own long term plans to recognize this truth. It is always best to plan on a short term basis, as this is more achievable and does not result in such emotional or financial difficulties when things do not work out as planned. On the other hand, failure in long term plans will lead to more serious emotional and financial difficulties.

In addition, long term plans always causes one's mind to focus on this material world, which distracts them from preparing for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This attitude will only lead to difficulties in both worlds. But when one makes short term worldly plans, it does not distract them from the bigger picture meaning, preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, long term plans distract a person from enjoying the lawful aspects of this world, such as spending time with one's children. They delay enjoying these things as they are too busy working towards their long term goal. This can disrupt their relationships and cause long term issues, such as divorce.

A muslim must understand that they can plan as much as they want but ultimately only what Allah, the Exalted, has planned and decided will occur. So it is best to minimise this as much as possible and instead focus on fulfilling one's necessities and responsibilities in this world and preparing for their journey to the hereafter. This is what the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. He advised muslims to live in this material world as a stranger or traveller. Allah, the Exalted, will bless this behaviour so that the muslim finds peace and happiness in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Strengthening Faith - 71

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the life of a celebrity who had passed away. It mentioned their legacy and the different things they achieved in their life. Even though, they achieved much worldly success there were still things in their life which tainted their successful legacy, such as crimes and allegations.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography, which has been verified by reliable muslim and non-muslim historians, that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success and peace of mind in both one's worldly and religious life. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his, whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it will lead to regrets and even punishment on a Great Day. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

“And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind.”

Strengthening Faith - 72

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the increase of crimes within London over the past decade. Unfortunately, there are some who claim that faith is not required in this world and others, who are Muslims, claim it is enough to profess Islam without supporting it with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But this increase in crime proves the importance of faith and strengthening it through knowledge and action. This is because crimes and sins only occur as a person feels they will either face no consequences for their actions, such as prison, or they will somehow escape them, for example, by fleeing the country. But the person who believes that no matter what action they perform, whether open or secret, big or small, and no matter what tricks they attempt, a Day will undoubtedly come where they will be held accountable for all their deeds, will always think twice before committing a crime or a sin. If this belief is strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge it will deter one from committing crimes and sins. If people acted in this way, peace and justice would spread across society. The crime rate would decrease and the times would closely match the times of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his rightly guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them. This fact alone indicates the importance of faith and strengthening it through gaining and acting on knowledge. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 90:

“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving [help] to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”

And chapter 24 An Nur, verse 55:

“Allāh has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient.”

Strengthening Faith - 73

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the faith of some people and their claims that their belief and obedience to their God is in their heart and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam, something which is easily doable as Allah, the Exalted, does not charge a person with a responsibility they cannot fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's spiritual heart is pure, the body becomes pure, which means their actions become correct. But if one's spiritual heart is corrupt, the body becomes corrupt, which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure spiritual heart.

In addition, disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person

is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety, they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them, as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them, even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Finally, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. A proof, Allah, the Exalted, has commanded one to obtain. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail, so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even if they possess faith in their heart.

Strengthening Faith - 74

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the leaders of the modern world. It was quite obvious that they take advantage of their position, as they misuse the tax payers wealth on their own personal things and unnecessary events. It is a shame how things have changed so much since the day of the righteous predecessors. In those days, when they became leaders, they in fact became the servants of the people and instead of spending the people's wealth on their own personal things, they would spend their own personal wealth on the people. Whereas, nowadays the leaders and royal families instead spend the wealth of the people and behave as if they are the masters of the nation.

It is important for muslims to select the righteous predecessors as their role models and adopt their characteristics. For example, muslims must fulfil their duties towards all those under their care which has been advised in a Hadith, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. This does not mean one should not care about themselves. It means they should fulfil their own personal duties and then strive to fulfil their duties in respect to their dependents without going overboard. They must first obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and fulfil the rights of people.

Strengthening Faith - 75

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the widespread difficulties muslims all over the world are facing. Even though tests and trials have affected believers since the dawn of time, particularly in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet it seems like the modern day tests only lead to more difficulties and humiliation for muslims. Whereas, the tests which the righteous predecessors faced, only led to their honour in both worlds. The main reason for this difference in the outcome of tests is that when the righteous predecessors faced tests, in fact greater tests than the modern day muslims, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, they faced their tests and difficulties while sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This resulted in them safely passing the test and receiving great honour and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 24 An Nur, verse 55:

“Allāh has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient.”

Whereas, many muslims in this day and age face tests but do not remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They fail to understand that success and honour through tests is only granted to those who remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whereas, being disobedient only leads to disgrace. Therefore, muslims should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on an edge, whereby they are only obedient to Him in times of ease and turn away from Him angrily and disobediently in times of difficulty. This is not real servant hood or obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

Simply put, no action will aid muslims in the long run, if it is not based on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Disobedience will only lead from one difficulty to another, one disgrace to another. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 147:

“What would Allah do with [i.e., gain from] your punishment if you are grateful and believe?...”

Strengthening Faith - 76

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the last words spoken by famous people before they passed away. It is common for people to enquire and pay extra attention to the final words of others, whether they are passing away or leaving on a long journey. People have adopted this mentality, as they know that someone's last words are often true and are very important. Therefore, muslims should reflect on the final verse of the Holy Quran to be revealed, which according to some scholars is chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 281:

“And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged [i.e., treated unjustly].”

Muslims should try to understand the importance of this verse, as it is the final words revealed to mankind from Allah, the Exalted. He chose to remind mankind of the Day of Judgment and preparing for it over all other things He could have spoken about. Therefore, muslims should understand the reality of this Great Day so that they can prepare adequately for it. This is only achievable through the sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. No deed, small or big, will be overlooked or forgotten. All will be held accountable for every breath they took on this Earth. They will be no second chances nor an opportunity

to make peace with Allah, the Exalted. If one has earned good, they will receive good. If they earned evil, then they may well find destruction.

The other last words which are important to understand and act on is recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2698. They are the last words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He advised muslims on the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers. Out of all the things he could have advised on, he chose to mention the obligatory prayers. This alone should make one understand the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the prayer is the thing which separates disbelief from belief. Muslims feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, even though they believe in Him and call upon Him. But as most of them have failed to establish their obligatory prayers, meaning fulfil them with all their conditions and etiquettes, they have not maintained their bond with Allah, the Exalted. Muslims must understand that establishing the obligatory prayers is the first barrier which protects them from misguidance. One only needs to reflect on the people they know who became misguided and in most cases the first step of their misguidance was failing to establish the obligatory prayers. When this barrier was destroyed, then misguidance and committing major sins became easy. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

“...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...”

Therefore, muslims should act on the final words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by correctly establishing

their obligatory prayers and encourage their dependents, such as their children, to do the same. It is best to encourage them before it becomes obligatory on them so that they become used to it by the time they reach this age. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495.

Muslims should not make up lame excuses when failing this duty, as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden someone with a duty they cannot fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”

Strengthening Faith - 77

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the drastic increase in the number of youth getting involved in crime. Muslims must understand an important principle which can prevent the youth from reaching this outcome. Even though, there are many obligatory duties on muslims yet the greatest of them is establishing the obligatory prayers. This is when one performs the prayers while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes, such as performing them on time. This is because abandoning the obligatory prayers, in most cases, is the first step which leads to major sins and misguidance. This has been indicated in the Holy Quran. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

“...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...”

The obligatory prayers act as a barrier which protects one from this misguidance. But when destroys this barrier, it is only a matter of time before they become misguided. This has been warned in chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 36:

“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil, and he is to him a companion.”

One only needs to reflect on the people they know who have become misguided and they will realize that, in most cases, the first step of their misguidance was abandoning the obligatory prayers.

Therefore, it is vital for muslims to establish their obligatory prayers correctly and ensure their dependents, such as their children, do the same. Parents must be proactive by encouraging children to offer their prayers even before they reach the age it becomes obligatory on them. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495. Delaying this important teaching will become a great regret for both the parents and the child, as encouraging an older child to establish their obligatory prayers when they are not used to it is extremely difficult. Parents should remember that they will answer for their failure to rightly guide their children on Judgment Day, as this was a duty on them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire...”

One of the main reasons why the obligatory prayers act as a barrier from misguidance is that it constantly and regularly reminds a muslim of their accountability on Judgement Day. The same way one stands in front of Allah, the Exalted, in the prayer, is the same way they will stand in front of Him on Judgement Day. The one who turns to Allah, the Exalted,

throughout their day and are reminded of their inevitable reality, the more they will avoid doing the things which displease Him.

Strengthening Faith - 78

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the rise and fall of tyrannical leaders. It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has, a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life, where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison, and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people, not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things, as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority and influence, then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims, until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be

thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do, will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact, it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

Strengthening Faith - 79

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the extreme suffering of muslims all around the world, such as Palestine. Even though, much of the world's natural resources, such as oil, are in the hands of muslims yet the muslims as a nation have very little influence on society and other nations. Muslims often blame others for this social weakness, such as the countries in the west. They blame their propaganda against muslims as the cause of this widespread social weakness and influence. Unfortunately, many do not understand that this was not the habit of the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them. They were few in a number yet overcame entire nations. This is because instead of finger pointing at others they looked in the mirror and assessed their own characters and changed for the better according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It was this sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which led to their strength, even if they were few in number. Whereas, many muslims today are so busy pointing fingers at others that they do not reflect on their own flaws and disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. This caused them to become satisfied with themselves, which according to some scholars, is the root of all evil traits. This is because the one who is satisfied with himself will not strive to search for their own faults nor will they correct them according to the teachings of Islam. This will always lead to bad characteristics and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves misusing the blessings He has granted them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, that when muslims break their covenant of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, their enemies will be granted power over them and they will freely take the belongings of muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even declared in a Hadith found in

Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, that a time will come when muslims will be great in number but still have no value in the eyes of the world. This is because of their love for the material world and their dislike for death. The love of the material world will always cause one to turn away from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will result in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and thus the influence of the muslim nation will become insignificant, which will lead to a difficult and constricted life for them. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

Muslims should stop blaming others and instead reflect on their own character and correct it according to the teachings of Islam. This will cause them to strive for and love the hereafter. Allah, the Exalted, will then put their awe and respect in the hearts of the rest of society just like He done for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This will allow the Islamic nation to once again obtain strength and influence within society and lead a peaceful and good life. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”

Strengthening Faith - 80

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the portrayal of muslims in the media, especially the entertainment industry. If one reflects for a moment, they will realise that in most cases in the media, such as the movie industry, muslims are often represented in two ways. They are either shown to have an extreme mentality whereby, they misinterpret the teachings of Islam in order to harm innocent people. Or they are shown as care-free people who are only muslim by name, while their actions clearly contradict Islamic teachings. For example, they are often shown as alcohol drinkers and clubbers. It is very rare to see muslims being portrayed correctly, such as a balanced rightly-guided muslim who fulfils their obligatory duties and takes part in the material world without compromising on their faith. This incorrect portrayal of muslims should not fool muslims into believing that the vast majority of the Islamic nation fit into these two extreme categories. In fact, the vast majority are balanced muslims and those who possess an extreme mentality are the minority. A muslim who observes this should therefore not give up their modesty and compromise on their faith believing that everyone else is doing the same, so it is therefore acceptable for them to do so too. Unfortunately, this incorrect belief has already infected many muslims who use this poor excuse to take part in major sins, such as backbiting. This is an extremely immature attitude which fails to justify one's actions in a worldly court, how then can this excuse hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day?

A muslim should therefore, not be fooled and remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the

traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not follow the behaviour of what the entertainment industry shows them. If a muslim chooses misguidance, then they should know for certain that claiming everyone else was also misguided will not save them from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted. And if they remain steadfast on right guidance, then the misguidance of others will not harm them in this world or in the next. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 105:

“O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided...”

Strengthening Faith - 81

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which advise mankind that whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted, will be saved from the fire of Hell. One such example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128.

The meaning of these Hadiths is that whoever dies while believing in this testimony will either enter Paradise and escape Hell or they will enter Hell to the extent of their sins and then eventually be allowed into Paradise where they will dwell forever. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7510.

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to unlock a specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire...”

The Holy Quran has warned muslims that whoever commits sins is in reality worshipping the Devil as they have obeyed him over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 36 Yaseen, verse 60:

“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”

The muslims who reject their desires, the desires of others and the commands of the Devil and instead only obey Allah, the Exalted, have truly taken Allah, the Exalted, as their God. These muslims have been granted

the protection of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These muslims have practically actualised the testimony of Islam as they supported their verbal and internal claim with sincere actions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one acts according to his traditions they have fulfilled the second aspect of the testimony namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted. These muslims are the ones referred to in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128. It advises they will be saved from the Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

The person who declares Islam with the tongue and internally accepts it is undoubtedly a muslim but their true sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, is diminished according to their sins.

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, muslims have been commanded to follow him. Chapter 3 Alea Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [O Muhammad], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...”

It is clear from Islamic teachings that loving what Allah, the Exalted, hates and disliking what Allah, the Exalted, loves is a clear indication of a person following their own desires and obeying them over Allah, the Exalted. This attitude reduces one's belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. The following verse makes it clear that adopting this mentality is a deviation from true belief in the testimony of Islam. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

“Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.””

The one who worships Allah, the Exalted, according to their own desires worships Him on the edge. Meaning, when they face times of ease they become pleased but when they encounter difficulties they turn away from His obedience in anger. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, informs muslims how to correctly believe and act on the testimony of faith, which prevents one being harmed by the fire of Hell in the next world. This is to first complete the obligatory duties correctly while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes. Then one must add to this by performing voluntary righteous deeds, the best of which are the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and causes Allah, the Exalted, to empower every organ of their body so that they only obey Him. This true and sincere obedience is the fulfilment of the testimony of faith. This is the sound heart which contains only the love of Allah, the Exalted, and is free of worldly desires and the love of the material world. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

"The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."

It is important to note, this does not mean a muslim becomes free from committing sins but it means they sincerely repent from them whenever they are rarely committed.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

Strengthening Faith - 82

Financial interest denotes the amount that a lender receives from a borrower at a fixed rate of interest. At the time of the revelation of the Holy Quran many forms of interest transactions were practiced. Of these one was that the vendor sold an article and fixed a time limit for the payment of the price, stipulating that if the buyer failed to pay within the specified period of time they would extend the time limit but increase the price of the article. Another was that a person loaned a sum of money to another person and stipulated that the borrower should return a specified amount in excess of the amount loaned within a given time limit. A third form of interest transaction was that the borrower and vendor agreed that the former would repay the loan within a certain limit at a fixed rate of interest, and that if they failed to do so within the limit the lender would extend the time limit but at the same time would increase the rate of interest. It is transactions such as these that the injunctions mentioned here apply.

Those who believe this fail to differentiate between the profit gained from lawful investment and financial interest. As a result of this confusion some argue that if profit on money invested in a business is lawful why should the profit made from a loan be deemed unlawful? They argue that instead of a person investing their wealth they loan it to somebody who in turn makes a profit out of it. In such circumstances why should the borrower not pay the lender a part of the profit? They fail to recognize that no business venture is immune from risk. No venture carries an absolute guarantee of profit. Therefore, it is not fair that the financier alone should be considered entitled to a profit at a fixed rate in all circumstances and should be protected against any chance of loss. It is not a part of justice that those who dedicate their resources are not guaranteed profit at any fixed rate whereas

those who lend their wealth are fully secured against all risks of loss and are guaranteed profit at a fixed rate.

In a normal lawful transaction a buyer derives benefit from an item which they purchase from a seller. The seller receives compensation for the effort and time spent on making the item. In interest-related transactions on the other hand, exchange of benefits does not take place equitably. The interest receiving party receives a fixed amount as a payment for the loan they gave and thus their gain is secured. The other party can make use of the funds loaned but it may not always yield a profit. If such a person spends the borrowed funds on a need there will be no profit. Even if the funds are invested then one stands the chance of both making a profit or incurring a loss. Hence an interest-related transaction causes either a loss on one side and a profit on the other or an assured and fixed profit on one side and an uncertain profit on the other. Therefore, lawful trade is not equal to financial interest.

In addition, the burden of interest makes it extremely difficult for borrowers to repay the loan. They may even have to borrow from another source in order to pay off the original loan and interest. Because of the way interest works the sum outstanding against them often remains even after they have repaid the loan. This financial pressure can prevent people obtaining the necessities of life for themselves and their families. This stress can lead to many physical and mental problems.

Ultimately, in this type of system only the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

Even though dealing with financial interest may outwardly seem that a person gains wealth but in reality it only causes an overall loss to them. This loss can take many forms. For example, it may lead them to losing good and lawful business dealings they could have obtained if they refrained from dealing with financial interest. Allah, the Exalted, may cause them to use their wealth in ways which do not please them. For example, they may encounter physical ailments which causes them to spend their precious unlawful wealth thereby failing to use it in ways pleasing to them. The overall loss has a spiritual aspect also. The more they deal with financial interest the greater their greed becomes meaning, their greed for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they lost the grace which accompanies lawful business and wealth. This may even push them towards gaining more unlawful wealth through financial interest and other means. The loss in the hereafter is more obvious. They will be left empty handed on the Day of Judgement as no good deed which is rooted in the unlawful, such as giving charity with unlawful wealth, is accepted by Allah, the Exalted. It does not take a scholar to determine where this person is likely to end up on Judgement Day.

There is a huge difference between lawful business transactions and interest-related transactions. The former plays a beneficial role in society whereas the latter leads to its decline. By its very nature interest breeds greed, selfishness, apathy and cruelty towards others. It leads to the worship of wealth and destroys compassion and unity with others. Thus it can ruin society from both an economic and a moral viewpoint.

Charity, on the other hand, is the outcome of generosity and compassion. Due to mutual co-operation and goodwill the society will develop positively which in turn benefits everyone. It is obvious that if there is a society whose individuals are selfish in their dealings with one another, in which the interests of the rich are directly opposed to the interests of the common people, that society does not rest on stable foundations. In such a society, instead of love and compassion there is bound to grow mutual spite and bitterness.

To conclude, when people fulfil their own needs and the needs of their dependents and then spend in charitable ways with their surplus wealth or take part in mutually lawful business ventures then the trade, industry, and agriculture in such a society will improve. The standard of living within the society will rise and production in it will be much higher than in societies where economic activity is constricted by financial interest.

Strengthening Faith - 83

Severe warnings over failing to donate the obligatory charity have been given in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 3 Alea Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection...”

According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, when the members of a society withhold the obligatory charity Allah, the Exalted, will withhold rain and if it was not for the animals He would not let it rain at all. This major sin is therefore one potential cause of the long periods of drought some nations face.

Not offering the obligatory charity is a sign of extreme greed as it is only an extremely tiny portion of one's wealth namely, 2.5%. It is clear that the

miser is far from Allah, the Exalted, the people and close to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Muslims must understand that donating the obligatory charity does not only protect them from punishment but it leads to blessings in one's life which far outweigh the wealth they donated. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6592, that charity does not decrease one's wealth. This means that when one donates Allah, the Exalted, compensates them. For example, He provides them with business opportunities which cause them to gain more wealth than they donated. This repayment is confirmed in many places of the Holy Quran for example, chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 11:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He will multiply it for him and he will have a noble reward?”

In addition, this Hadith could indicate that as each person's provision is pre-recorded whatever wealth which is destined to be spent on them will never change irrespective of how much wealth a person donates. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748.

A muslim must therefore avoid the wrath of Allah, the Exalted, by donating a very small fraction of their wealth in the form of the obligatory charity

while hoping for a reward which is much greater both in this world and the next.

Strengthening Faith - 84

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the

Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”

For example, if a muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it

weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

Strengthening Faith - 85

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is earning and using unlawful wealth. This is a major sin and must be avoided at all costs. It is clear from the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that Allah, the Exalted, does not accept any righteous deed which has a foundation in the unlawful. For example, the one who earns unlawful wealth and then uses it to perform the Holy Pilgrimage will find that they have wasted their time and apart from sins they have gained nothing. This attitude completely contradicts possessing the fear of Allah, the Exalted. He only accepts things from those who fear Him. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 27:

“...Indeed, Allah only accepts from the righteous [who fear Him].”

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1410, warns that Allah, the Exalted, only accepts lawful wealth which is spent to please Him. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, that even the supplication of the one who earns and uses unlawful wealth is rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

In reality, a person only needs a little to survive in this world. It is clear from the righteous predecessors that it is possible to completely abstain from

unlawful or doubtful wealth by leading a moderate life which is far from extravagance. It is obvious one only leans towards unlawful wealth because of their unnecessary desires and wishes.

To conclude, it is important for muslims to avoid the four major obstacles to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which have been discussed in this short book. The first step is to obtain correct Islamic knowledge from a reliable source. Then one must strive to act on it by fulfilling their obligatory duties, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and their worldly responsibilities all sincerely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will lead one around the obstacles to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and safely guide them to the gates of Paradise.

Strengthening Faith - 86

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2141, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that wealth is not bad as long as the one who possesses it has piety. He added that good health was better than wealth and concluded that being cheerful is a blessing.

The muslim who possesses piety will always spend their wealth in the correct way namely, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. So for them it will become a blessing in both worlds. It is important to note, spending in the correct way goes beyond charity and includes all types of lawful useful spending which is void of excessiveness, wasting or extravagance, such as spending on one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006.

Piety is only achieved by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.
Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

This knowledge will ensure a Muslim understands how to use their wealth, and their other worldly blessings, correctly. They will understand that using these blessings correctly leads to peace and success in both worlds whereas misusing them leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Even though this type of wealth is a great blessing but having good health whereby one fulfills all their practical duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation independently, is a greater blessing. This is obvious as the rich happily spend their wealth in order to remain healthy and avoid sickness. One should therefore make use of their good health by striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by performing voluntary righteous deeds, such as offering their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation and by performing voluntary fasts, before a day comes when they lose their good health and are left with regrets.

Finally, it is important for muslims to adopt positive characteristics, such as cheerfulness, as this is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also helps to tackle the different difficulties and tests one will face during their life. The one who adopts a positive mindset will more easily be patient during these times.

Whereas, those who adopt a general negative and pessimistic mentality will become more easily impatient and disobedient to Allah, the Exalted, during times of difficulties. A muslim should regularly review the countless blessings they were granted in order to maintain a positive mindset. In addition, they must gain and act on Islamic knowledge, as this will encourage them to understand the reality that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees what is best for people, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Strengthening Faith - 87

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the countless people in this world and the countless different paths they are journeying down. This in itself is an indication of the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Even though, there are billions of people yet no two people walk the exact same path in life. Understanding these signs strengthens one's faith but this chapter will discuss something else.

Whenever a Muslim finds themselves on a lawful path they should firstly show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He alone granted them in the way prescribed by Islam. The other important thing is that a Muslim should never look down on others believing that their path is somehow superior to the path of others especially those who are on a lawful path also. This only leads to pride which will lead one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266. Instead, they should firstly understand that they are unaware of the final outcome of their life or the lives of others. Someone on an unlawful path can easily sincerely repent and be saved before death.

Secondly, in the case of others on a lawful path a Muslim should understand that each person has been granted the best path for them which differs from the best possible path of others. For example, one Muslim may spend most of their time in a Mosque and another Muslim may spend most of their time on lawful worldly things, such as an occupation. The first Muslim is not better than the second as each person is on the best

path for them. If they swapped places it would most likely lead them to destruction. For example, if they swapped the one who now spends time in a Mosque could adopt pride and thus be destroyed. So it is better for them to be involved in lawful worldly things. On the other hand, the other Muslim who now dedicates most of their time to the material world could get lost in it and head towards the unlawful. So it would be better for this Muslim to spend most of their time in a Mosque.

Therefore, Muslims should never be jealous nor look down upon each other as each person is on the best possible path for them, as long as this path is lawful. This attitude will always lead to humility and mutual love for each other and according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2510, sincerely loving each other for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a characteristic which leads one to Paradise. It is important to note, this discussion does not mean one should not try to improve themselves by acting on the teachings of Islam. It means they should be happy for others who are journeying down a lawful path.

Strengthening Faith - 88

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the powerful weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people is to beautify an element of this world in order to create a fantasy which looks appealing. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 63:

"By Allāh, We did certainly send [messengers] to nations before you, but Satan made their deeds attractive to them..."

When a person observes others, the Devil will take a snapshot of that moment and beautify it in such a way that the person creates a whole fantasy world from it in their mind. For example, a person will observe a family who took a selfie while on holiday and this single moment is taken out of context by the person so that it distracts from obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him. For example, they might get jealous of the family and their moment of happiness on their holiday. Jealousy always leads to other negative traits such as bitterness. It may also cause them to belittle the good things Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. The one who behaves in this manner can never be grateful to Allah, the Exalted. The beautification process can also encourage them to strive to adopt the lifestyle which has been created in their imagination. This often causes one to misuse the blessings they have been granted. It causes them to strive for the material world beyond their needs and causes them to neglect their responsibilities and duties. This always leads to stress and even sins. This in turn, will

prevent one from preparing adequately for the Day of Judgement, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

These are just some examples of what occurs when one falls for the Devil's trick. A Muslim should always remember that as they are looking at a moment from another person's life, they can never understand the difficulties and stresses they are facing. They merely see a small, narrow and exterior aspect of a situation which is very often misleading. For example, the family taking the selfie may well be hating their holiday and spending time with each other and only smile for the photo they have taken. A photo does not reveal the difficulties of family life. A Muslim must always remember that Allah, the Exalted, gives each person what is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

They should therefore concentrate on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as their peace and success in both worlds lies in this. It does not lie in pursuing a fantasy concocted by the Devil from a single moment of someone else's life. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Strengthening Faith - 89

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. The Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly stand out as the best group of people that have ever existed, second only to the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. One of the things which made them great was their high aims and aspirations. In everything they did and said they always aimed for the hereafter instead of aiming for the material world. Even if one removes their abundant worship and only observes their daily activities, they will clearly see a group of people who truly believed in the hereafter, as the majority of their daily efforts were dedicated to the hereafter, as they always used the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and avoided using them in vain and sinful ways. On the other hand, if one removes the obligatory prayers from a modern Muslim's daily life they will not be able to differentiate them by their daily activities from a non-Muslim. This is only because of their low aspirations and aims. Meaning, the vast majority of their efforts are dedicated to this material world, just like a non-Muslim. One should not fool themselves into believing that they are doing the same thing as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did. Yes, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, took part in business and raised families but the way they did these things were totally rooted in the teachings of Islam. They earned and spent only in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and avoided anything which would not benefit them in the hereafter. How many Muslims can claim they behave in this way? The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, got married but they chose a spouse based completely on the teachings of Islam and strived hard to fulfill the rights of their spouse according to the teachings of Islam instead of according to their own desires. How many Muslims can claim they behave in this manner? The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, raised

children by teaching them the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and taught them to prioritize preparing for the hereafter over this world, by using the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslim parents today, only teach their children how to recite the Holy Quran without understanding it and acting on it and put their full effort in encouraging them to succeed in earning lots of wealth and buying lots of properties.

Modern Muslims do copy the actions of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, but as their aims and aspirations are focused on the material world they are very apart from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

One must live their life in a way so that it becomes apparent to someone observing their day to day activities that they truly believe in the hereafter, as their aims and aspirations are all pointing towards the hereafter. This is achieved when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One cannot behave like this only during the five obligatory prayers, which takes less than an hour of a day, and instead show this attitude in every action and word. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and is one of the reasons behind their greatness.

Strengthening Faith - 90

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the main delusions of this world and a weapon of the Devil is when one convinces themselves that they are different from others and will therefore not share the fate of the vast majority of people who adopted a certain way of life and path. For example, many people who are not rich and famous, observe celebrities who are drowned in mental disorders, such as anxiety, stress and substance addiction, as a consequence of their way of life, and they falsely believe that if they were granted fame and fortune their outcome would somehow be different. How many Muslims claim that if they were granted abundant wealth, like the billionaires of this world, they would eradicate world poverty? This particular attitude has even been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 75-76:

"And among them are those who made a covenant with Allāh, [saying], 'If He should give us from His bounty, we will surely spend in charity, and we will surely be among the righteous.' But when He gave them from His bounty, they were stingy with it and turned away while they refused."

Another common example is when one chooses a person of bad character to marry, even though their relatives and friends warn them against it. But they foolishly believe that unlike the vast majority of people who married someone of bad character and suffered as a result, they will not meet this

fate and instead somehow reform their spouse so they become a model Muslim and citizen.

A final common example, similar to the one mentioned earlier, is that even though Islam recommends and encourages Muslims to only earn the lawful wealth they need to fulfill their necessities and responsibilities, as the majority of people who earn more than this only become greedy or wasteful and extravagant, yet many Muslims ignore the outcome of the majority and claim that they will be different and will only spend their excessive wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. If this was true they would be no poverty in the world.

The truth is that even though people possess different characteristics, yet people are still people. If the majority of people failed to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, when adopting a certain way of life, in most cases, the one who follows them will fail also.

A Muslim must use the perception Allah, the Exalted, granted them in order to make the right choices in life. They must observe the choices made by others and the outcome they encountered and not assume they themselves will somehow encounter a different result if they choose the same path as them. One should not think they are special and different from the majority of other people. This attitude prevents one from using their perception correctly and can therefore lead to a disastrous outcome. The wise person chooses a path where the majority of people who journeyed down it succeeded in both worlds. This is the path of learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other paths should be avoided, even if one believes they can transverse it safely, as this is nothing but a deception and a trick from the Devil.

Strengthening Faith - 91

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the most powerful signs which indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His supreme power and authority over the creation is experienced by most people irrespective of their faith or lack of it. When a person faces a genuine difficulty, which cannot be resolved by the means they possess or have access to, they often supplicate to One god, Allah, the Exalted. They do not even appeal to multiple gods as their soul prevents them from doing so during their time of desperation. This is a reality which is often shown in movies and television shows, where a character, who does not even believe in a God, appeals to One God in their moment of need. As hard as movie producers have tried to belittle religion, this reality is still shown quite often in the movie industry.

This innate desire to call on One god, Allah, the Exalted, in desperate times originates from one's soul. The soul which was once in the company of Allah, the Exalted, and testified to His Lordship, Oneness and absolute control and power over all things. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172:

"And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified."..."

One should take heed of these moments, as it is clear sign of the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This heedfulness will encourage them to believe in Him, if they do not already, and it will encourage them to sincerely obey Him, by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as peace and a successful outcome lies in this. This is something one's soul testifies to, especially during times of difficulties. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 22:

"It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are in ships and they sail with them¹ by a good wind and they rejoice therein, there comes a storm wind and the waves come upon them from every place and they expect to be engulfed, they supplicate Allāh, sincere to Him in religion, "If You should save us from this, we will surely be among the thankful.""

And chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth..."

Strengthening Faith - 92

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the main reasons why many Muslims in the modern world turn away from seeking peace of mind from learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is because they falsely believe that the teachings of Islam do not cater for their modern stresses, difficulties and problems. They wrongly believe that the teachings of Islam only caters for desert and village dwellers who were living in a bygone era. As a result, they only take the rituals and practices of Islam from Islamic teachings but abandon the day to day living advice that is found in Islamic teachings. This is a foolish mentality, as no matter what era a people belong to, humans are still humans. Meaning, the aims, hopes, aspirations, fears, anxieties and stresses faced by people over the generations have always been the same. Technology has advanced over time but the essence and nature of humans has always been the same. Humans have not evolved into a different species so that their emotions, feelings, desires, aims and wishes are completely different from the people that came in earlier generations. Just like the older generations had the desire to gain fame, fortune, authority, family, friends and a career, so do the modern day people.

As the teachings of Islam target the essence and nature of humans it is therefore timeless and applies to all humans till the Day of Judgement. It will only cease to apply if humans evolve into a different species, which is not going to occur.

In addition, as the knowledge of Islam comes from Allah, the Exalted, the Creator of humans, the advice is accurate and encompasses every aspect of a person's mental and physical makeup. This knowledge lies only with Allah, the Exalted, and no amount of research can ever fully reveal all aspects of a human. Just like an inventor is the best person to seek advice in respect to their invention, Allah, the Exalted, alone is the best One to seek advice regarding the mental and physical wellbeing of a human. Finally, as Allah, the Exalted, controls the hearts of people, the station of emotions, He alone has control over whether one achieves peace of mind and body in this world and the next. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

"And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep."

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that with His remembrance and obedience lies good mental and physical health in both worlds. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who forgets Allah, the Exalted, and instead misuses the blessings they have been granted, will find no peace of mind, irrespective of how many worldly things they own. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

To conclude, as long as a person remains human, the timeless teachings of Islam will always apply to them, irrespective of the age they belong to. As long as they remain a creation of Allah, the Exalted, only He can give them the solution to mental and physical wellbeing. Seeking this elsewhere will only lead to poor mental and physical health, which is obvious if one observes social media and the news.

Strengthening Faith - 93

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the difficult realities Muslims are facing in this day and age, is the doubts in Islam caused by the behaviour of other Muslims. This is a reality which every nation has faced and has therefore been discussed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 110:

"And We had certainly given Moses the Scripture, but it came under disagreement. And if not for a word that preceded from your Lord, it would have been judged between them. And indeed they are, concerning it in disquieting doubt."

When the scholars and religious people misused divine teachings for the sake of gaining worldly things, such as wealth and authority, the general population were put off from faith when they observed their bad behaviour. The same reality has also affected Muslims. They observe supposedly religious people who intentionally misinterpret divine teachings thereby failing to implement the correct teachings of Islam. For example, some Muslim nations prevent women from receiving an education, even though it is obligatory for every man and woman to gain knowledge, according to the teachings of Islam, such as the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. Another widespread example, is when religious personalities spend all their time, energy and efforts in insulting, criticizing and defaming other Muslims. When the general population observes these types of behaviour they are put off from Islam, even if they do not outwardly show it.

First of all, all Muslims need to represent Islam correctly so that they fulfill their role as the ambassadors of Islam, in order to show the true face of Islam to the world. The root of this is possessing a good intention, to please Allah, the Exalted, and gaining and acting on correct Islamic knowledge, which is rooted in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Secondly, even though this reality exists, none the less, a Muslim is not excused from turning away from Islam because of the behaviour of others. They must instead gain the correct knowledge of Islam in order to verify for themselves what Islam teaches. There is no excuse in failing to do this, as the correct Islamic knowledge is widely available and accessible to the general public. Only through this method will one eliminate any potential doubts that can arise from observing the incorrect behaviour of other Muslims and prevent these doubts from infecting the coming generations of Muslims.

Strengthening Faith - 94

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is obvious when one observes social media that Muslims have become a nation of supplicators. Countless posts and videos can be observed which reference supplications found within Islamic teachings. Even though supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, plays an important role in Islam yet many have overlooked the fact that for supplications to be effective they must be coupled with sincere actions. The supplications in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are always coupled with sincere actions. For example, chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 127-129:

"And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You. And show us our rites [of worship] and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful. Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise.""

The Holy Prophets Ibrahim and Ismaeel, peace be upon them, were practically building the house of Allah, the Exalted, when they made this supplication. Meaning, their supplication was coupled with sincere good actions.

Another example is chapter 27 An Naml, verses 18-19:

"Until, when they came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said, "O ants, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Solomon and his soldiers while they perceive not." So [Solomon] smiled, amused at her speech, and said, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do righteousness of which You approve. And admit me by Your mercy into [the ranks of] Your righteous servants.""

It is obvious that the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, lived up to this supplication by showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings he was granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. He did not simply supplicate and fail to couple it with actions.

In addition, even the timings recommended for supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, are closely linked to physical actions. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3499, advises that Allah, the Exalted, readily accepts the supplication made after the obligatory prayers and in the last part of the night. Both of these times for supplications are connected to physical actions: the obligatory prayers and the night voluntary prayer.

There are many Hadiths which warn against certain actions which prevent the acceptance of a supplication. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2989, clearly warns that the supplication of a person who earns and consumes the unlawful will never be accepted. It is obvious that supplicating for certain things while performing actions which contradict the supplication is futile. For example, the one who supplicates for protection from Hell, yet persistently commits the sins which lead to Hell. Or the one who supplicates for Paradise yet fails to establish the righteous deeds which lead to Paradise, such as the obligatory prayers.

In addition, Islam makes it clear that a person cannot simply supplicate for success without actively striving for it. For example, Allah, the Exalted, commands the believers to take their precautions during fighting, He does not simply tell them to only supplicate to Him for success. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

"O you who have believed, take your precaution and [either] go forth in companies or go forth all together."

Even when a married couple have issues, Allah, the Exalted, does not simply tell them to supplicate to Him. He instead urges them to take practical steps to fix the issues. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 35:

"And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allāh will cause it between them. Indeed, Allāh is ever Knowing and Aware."

Even the greatest and most recited supplication is actively recited during every cycle of the prayer, thereby indicating that supplications must be coupled with sincere actions in order to be effective. Chapter 1 Al Fatihah, verses 5-7:

"It is You we worship and You we ask for help. Guide us to the straight path. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have earned [Your] anger or of those who are astray."

This discussion so far makes it clear that supplication by itself is not effective unless it is coupled with sincere actions. This is clear when one observes the attitude and behaviour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

Therefore, one should utilize supplications correctly by supporting them with sincere and righteous actions. If one faces a difficulty, they must use the resources they have been granted in order to solve the issue practically, such as difficulties amongst relatives, and then supplicate for

relief. One without the other is not the Islamic way. A sick person should seek medical advice and take medicine according to the teachings of Islam and also supplicate for relief. A person desiring a child, must get married first and try having a child with their spouse and then supplicate for it to occur. A person who desires to pass their exam must study and then supplicate for success. One must practically aid others in difficulty according to their means, such as financial support, and also supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, on their behalf. One must adhere to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then supplicate for good things in both worlds.

Unfortunately, becoming a lazy nation of supplicators who fail to couple their supplications with sincere and righteous actions is one of the major reasons why the Islamic nation as a whole and the faith of the individual Muslims has dramatically weakened over time.

Strengthening Faith - 95

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 16:

"Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allāh and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened..."

This verse indicates that as time progressed, the people of the book treated their faith as a bunch of empty practices, just like one fulfils cultural practices. The issue with treating faith like a cultural practice is that with the passing of time people give up cultural practices. For example, one will often observe a father who dresses according to his culture and heritage yet their child will dress according to a different culture. Therefore, as time passed for the people of the book, they eventually abandoned practicing on their faith, as they were nothing but empty practices to them, and their faith became just an empty shell whereby people claimed to believe yet failed to practice their religion. This is quite evident when one observes people today who claim to follow certain religions yet do not act upon their teachings at all. Once upon a time their religious institutions were always full of devoted learners and worshippers, now they are empty.

Unfortunately, the same thing has occurred with Muslims who, with the passing of time, observed their religion as a few empty practices, which eventually the coming generations abandoned.

The earlier generation of Muslims were devoted to Islam and therefore it was a way of life for them, not just practices and rituals. They dedicated themselves to learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and therefore Islam influenced their every word and action and every sphere of their lives, such as their personal, social, financial and work life. To them, Islam had fused with their blood and became inseparable from their daily activities. Practices can be abandoned, whereas something which is a way of life cannot be. For example, someone can give up a hobby because they do not feel like doing it but they cannot give up food or breathing oxygen for prolonged periods, as the latter is a way and means for life whereas the former is only a practice.

This attitude of the righteous predecessors has, in most cases, been abandoned, just like the people from other religions abandoned the teachings of their faith, as Islam is now observed as a set of practices and rituals with no real effect on one's day to day activities or conduct. This is the reason why the Mosques, which were always full during the five daily congregational prayers, are now practically empty. Only the practice of the Friday congregational prayer remains, but if things continue as they are, even that will be abandoned by the coming generations.

In addition, blind imitation of others is not good enough, as it prevents one from appreciating that Islam is a way of life and instead convinces them and those who observe them, such as the next generation, that Islam is only a few empty rituals and practices, which can be abandoned, just like cultural practices can be abandoned.

The way to avoid this outcome is to understand that Islam is not a bunch of practices, rather, it is a way of life which affects every moment of a Muslim. This understanding only comes when one learns and acts upon the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this ensures that every aspect of a person's life is connected to Islam. This ensures one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn leads to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Strengthening Faith - 96

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In this time of widespread oppression of innocent people all around the world, it is a duty of a Muslim to object to evil according to their capacity and within the laws of Islam. Many Muslims carry out this important duty, especially on social media, by quoting verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which mention the threats given to oppressors. But it is important to note that these verses and traditions apply to all people, including oneself. When one observes mass oppression of people, such as mass killings, it is easy for a Muslim to belittle their own disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and their own oppression of the rights of others by comparing it to the mass oppression carried out by others. For example, a Muslim who persistently behaves in a rude manner towards their spouse will belittle this act of oppression by observing the mass oppression of people in the news. They then concentrate on hurling verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which threaten oppressors to the people they observe in the news but forget to apply these Islamic teachings to themselves and their behaviour. Even though some types of oppression are worse than others, none the less, oppression is still oppression, and all forms of it will lead to darkness for the oppressor. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447.

This discussion does not mean one should not object to evil according to their strength and within the bounds of Islamic law, but it means they should not forget the acts of disobedience and oppression they commit by belittling them when comparing them to the mass oppression caused by others. One must continue objecting to evil but also constantly assess their

own actions in light of Islamic teachings so that they remove any aspect of oppression they commit through failing to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, or wronging people. Otherwise, they may well find that on Judgement Day they are raised with the very oppressors they objected to, during their life on Earth. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 42:

"And never think that Allāh is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays them [i.e., their account] for a Day when eyes will stare [in horror]."

Strengthening Faith - 97

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Every Muslim, irrespective of the strength of their faith, believes in the reality of Judgement Day, as this is one of the main pillars of faith. But the strength of one's belief in Judgement Day varies between Muslims. Even though assessing someone's exact level of belief in Judgement Day is beyond the capability of humans, as this is a hidden matter, yet there are some signs which do indicate the strength of one's belief. One of these signs is how much or little a Muslim is dedicated to learning and acting upon the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The stronger one's belief in Judgement Day, the more they will practically prepare for it. This is only possible when one learns and acts on the two sources of guidance, which in turn shows them how to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. So the stronger one's belief in Judgement Day, the more they will practice on the two sources of guidance and the weaker one's belief, the less they will practice on the two sources of guidance. This is why the one who does not believe in Judgement Day will not bother with the two sources of guidance, as they have no need to prepare for something they do not believe in. From this, one can assess how much they truly believe in the Day of Judgement. If they hardly learn and act on the two sources of guidance, it indicates that they hardly believe in Judgement Day, even if they claim otherwise. Every Muslim must regularly conduct this self-assessment so that they ensure they do not fool themselves into believing they possess strong faith in Judgement Day, even though, practically speaking, they hardly believe in it.

Strengthening Faith - 98

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to regularly judge and assess the strength of their faith in order to ensure they are heading in the right direction in life and improving themselves step by step. One of the best ways one can do this is by observing their condition in between the five daily obligatory prayers. Even though offering the five daily obligatory prayers is an excellent start but one must bear in mind that even the hypocrites in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would even pray. One must instead observe their condition in between the five daily obligatory prayers. They should assess their aims, desires, hopes and fears in order to evaluate whether they are living in the right way. All of these things influences how one uses the blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted. The more one focuses their aims, desires, hopes and fears on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and preparing for the hereafter, the more they will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. This has been outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

If one finds that they are using the blessings they have been granted in ways which are vain or sinful, then they are failing to fulfil the purpose of their creation and have forgotten Allah, the Exalted, for the vast majority of their day, even if they pray. This will lead to stress and trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

A Muslim must improve the strength of their faith by firstly minimizing using the blessings they have been granted in sinful ways. Then they must strive to minimize using these blessings in vain ways. They should assess each blessing and apply this model until they find that they are using all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is the path to peace of mind and success in both worlds, as the Controller of the hearts will not allow this Muslim to suffer a dark and constricted life in either this world or the next. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Strengthening Faith - 99

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. With the increased social media presence in the lives of all people and the ease with which one can socialize with others, it is important for Muslims to understand a key aspect of useful self-reflection. Self-reflection is needed to correctly assess a situation in order to make a sound and good judgement on how to deal with it. This is true in both worldly and religious matters. This self-reflection is only possible when one turns inwards and temporarily cuts off from external communication, such as talking to others. This is because a situation a person is experiencing can never be fully understood by another person, irrespective of how well they know each other. As every situation one faces creates different emotions and feelings which cannot be experienced by another, even if they experience a similar situation, as each person is different and therefore views and reacts to situations differently from others. This is why seeking advice from too many people only leads to confusion and making the wrong choices in life.

So even though seeking expert advice is recommended in both religious and worldly matters, one must still self-reflect over the situation in order to make the right decision according to their needs, character and ability.

In addition, it is not possible to multi task with self-reflection, just like a student cannot study correctly and surf on social media at the same time. But the one who is constantly drowned in socializing, whether they are listening and watching something, talking to someone or texting, will never

make the right judgement in respect to the situations they face, as they fail to truly self-reflect over them. It has become so bad that most people cannot even walk to a bus stop without socializing with others.

This self-reflection is important in all small religious and worldly matters, such as issues at work, and is important in respect to one's sense of direction and purpose in life. The one who over socializes, thereby failing to take regular time out to self-reflect, will lead a pointless and aimless life whereby they do not aim nor strive to fulfil their good aspirations, hopes and aims.

A Muslim must take time out to self-reflect so that they regularly question their purpose, the path they are on and whether they are heading in the right direction. It is through this one can correctly assess the worldly and religious situations they encounter and deal with them appropriately and ensure that they are heading in the right direction in life, so that they find peace and success in both worlds.

Strengthening Faith - 100

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. For most Muslims, believing that the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, leads to Paradise is not much of a leap of faith. This is because this concept has been infused into their minds from a young age and is quite obvious to accept also. The real leap of faith actually involves believing that the one who uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which is outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will obtain peace of mind and body in this world. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

One of the reasons this reality is hard to accept is that it seems to outwardly contradict logic. Logic dictates that a person will only find peace and happiness when they fulfill their desires. In addition, when people observe social media, culture, fashion and the majority of other people, they all point towards and encourage one to obtain peace and happiness through fulfilling their desires. Even the Devil will not deny that the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, leads to Paradise but he scares Muslims from using their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, beyond the basic obligatory duties, by convincing them that if they did this they would experience a miserable life in this world.

All these reasons and more prevent one from using their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as they fear giving up their desires will prevent them from being happy and obtaining peace of mind. Instead, people unconsciously claim that if Allah, the Exalted, grants them peace then they will use their blessings correctly in order to obtain more. But Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that a person will not gain peace until they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him first. This leads to a person becoming inactive thereby preventing them from acting correctly and obtaining peace of mind and body.

One must study, learn and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to strengthen their faith, which will encourage them to take this leap of faith so that they obtain peace of mind and body in both worlds. For example, when one believes with certainty that the Controller of hearts is none but Allah, the Exalted, then they understand that no worldly desire will lead to peace of mind if one fails to use the worldly blessings they have been granted correctly. Whereas, no difficulty will prevent them from

obtaining peace of mind, as long as they use the blessings they have been granted correctly, just like the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, obtaining peace and security in the midst of a fire. Chapter 21 An Anbiya, verses 68-69:

"They said, "Burn him [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] and support your gods - if you are to act." We [i.e., Allāh] said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.""

Strengthening Faith - 101

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the main reasons why Muslims strive hard to obtain their worldly desires, at the cost of practically preparing for Judgement Day, is their fear of losing out on obtaining their desires in this world. This fear is an extremely powerful tool which the Devil manipulates in order to distract a Muslim from preparing for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In order to avoid this outcome, a Muslim must always remember that as long as they internally believe in Islam and actively practice on its teachings they will never face losing out on anything they hoped to gain. This is because a Muslim who genuinely strives hard to obey Allah, the Exalted, has been promised Paradise in the hereafter. Therefore, whatever they desired in this world and were fearful of losing out on obtaining it, they can have in Paradise. They will be able to enjoy the thing they wanted permanently and in it's perfect form. Whereas, even if they obtained what they desire in this world, it would never be permanent or perfect. So in reality, there is no such thing as losing out on anything for a Muslim, as they will either obtain the thing they desire in this world or in the next. Therefore, if they do not obtain it in this world, it will only be a short delay before they obtain it in the hereafter. One only needs to reflect on how fast their life has gone by so far to understand that the hereafter is only a moment away. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 45:

"And on the Day when He will gather them, [it will be] as if they had not remained [in the world] but an hour of the day..."

Remembering the important reality that for a sincere Muslim, every good desire will be fulfilled, sooner or later, will prevent them from excessively chasing its fulfillment at the loss of preparing for their hereafter. There is no losing out for a sincere Muslim, only a delay.

Strengthening Faith - 102

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Islam teaches people to be mindful of everything which occurs within their lives and the lives of others, as one can learn valuable lessons from them. For example, witnessing a sick person is a powerful reminder for a Muslim to make use of their good health before they lose it. Similarly, a Muslim should be mindful of their speech and the speech of others, as one can learn important lessons from them. People often experience slip of the tongue moments whereby they say something which may well reflect their inward state even if that is hidden from them and others. For example, when discussing the importance of family to someone, they may well state that the most important thing to a person should be their family. But when one correctly points out to them that the most important one in a Muslim's is Allah, the Exalted, the speaker quickly retracts their statement or replies that, that is what they meant, even though they did not say it. In these slip of the tongue moments, whether it occurs to oneself or others, one must reflect deeply on what was said and assess their own belief and actions to ensure they remain on the right course and continue to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and avoid deceiving themselves, even subconsciously.

Similarly, when others joke about something, there is often a layer of truth embedded in their joke. Meaning, a part of them does mean what they say, to a certain degree. One should be mindful of these things as they can learn deeper truths about their own psyche and behaviour, which is always important to monitor and if necessary, to adjust so that it runs in line with the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Strengthening Faith - 103

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In reality, there are only two standards a person can live by in this world. The correct standard comes from the Creator and Sustainer of all things, Allah, the Exalted. These standards are discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The other standard is what the world dedicates through social media, culture and fashion. This standard is fickle and changes with time and the one who adheres to them will adopt a fickle mental and physical state. When a Muslim abandons the standard set by Allah, the Exalted, they will inevitably follow the standard set by the world. One of the major issues this leads to is being influenced by normalization. This is when a particular attitude, behaviour or belief becomes acceptable to people as the wider society has accepted it and practices it. This can become a dangerous path to follow as it leads to sins and misguidance. For example, over time backbiting became normalized in society, as it occurs so much in society. As a result, many Muslims indulge in this major sin and dismissively state that everyone does it, whenever they are warned against it. Similarly, many Muslims incorrectly believe that it is enough to internally believe in Islam even if they do not practice on its teachings. As this attitude has become normalized in society, Muslims use the fact that many others behave in this manner to justify them adopting this deviant behaviour. A Muslim must always remember that using normalization in society as justification to commit sins is something Allah, the Exalted, will never accept. If everyone commits a specific sin, He will hold all of them accountable for it, even if it means He punishes them all.

Being negatively influenced by normalization in society can only truly be avoided when one chooses to learn and act on the standard set by Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

If one turns away from this standard, then they will inevitably follow the standard of life set by the world. This will cause one to forget Allah, the Exalted, and misuse the blessings they have been granted by Him. This only leads to a difficult life in this world and one's excuse of following what was considered normal in society will not be accepted on Judgement Day either. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Strengthening Faith - 104

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Muslims often complain that even though they are aware of the consequences they will face in the hereafter by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, namely, entering Hell, and many of them know the details about Hell and its horrors, yet they are not deterred from disobeying Allah, the Exalted. Similarly, even though they have some knowledge about the consequences of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, such as peace of mind in this world and Paradise in the next, yet their knowledge is often not enough to motivate them to sincerely obey Him, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One of the major causes of this attitude is weakness of faith. This can be understood by an example. When one is shown a scary picture or video, such as a cobra attacking someone, even though the person feels some apprehension, as they imagine being in that scary situation, yet this attitude is not enough to change their behaviour. For example, after seeing the scary picture or video, they do not flee out of fear. Whereas, if a person directly experiences something scary, such as being confronted by a cobra, it will create a greater level of fear in them than the first scenario and they will be motivated to act in order to save themselves from harm, such as fleeing the scene. The same principle applies for observing a beautiful picture/video compared to experiencing a beautiful event. Witnessing the event will always cause a more practical effect on the person than simply viewing it. This is the difference between weak and strong faith. The one who has weak faith will feel fear when they think or hear about the consequences of disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and feel joy when thinking and hearing about the consequences of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. But this fear and joy is not enough to affect their practical behaviour. It is similar to viewing a photo/video of something scary or beautiful. On the other hand, the one who possesses strong faith is blessed with an inner vision so that it is like

they can physically observe the consequences of disobeying and obeying Allah, the Exalted. This inner vision is so powerful that it affects them practically and therefore encourages them to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and avoid His disobedience. This inner vision has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99.

One must strive to obtain strong faith and adopt this inner vision so that their behaviour towards Allah, the Exalted, and people improves. This is achieved by sincerely gaining and acting on the knowledge of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Without this knowledge and action, one will live without this inner vision and as a result of their weak faith, any reminders of the consequences of sincerely obeying or disobeying Allah, the Exalted, will have little or no effect on their behaviour.

Strengthening Faith - 105

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the main causes of people failing to show patience from the onset of a difficulty is when they lose focus on the bigger picture of life. Every situation a person faces is like only a single jigsaw piece compared to the whole jigsaw puzzle. But when one focuses completely on that single piece, which often represents a difficulty, they lose focus on the whole jigsaw puzzle and as a result, the difficulty appears much more serious than it truly is and its negative consequences seem more severe than they actually are. This hinders one from demonstrating patience, which involves avoiding complaining about the situation through speech or actions while maintaining one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. One of the best ways to avoid this outcome is to constantly focus on the Day of Judgement. This will help them to understand that their problem or difficulty is not such a big deal, as no Earthly difficulty compares to the difficulties of Judgement Day. Nor are the negative consequences of Earthly difficulties more severe than those of Judgement Day. One must remember that this is a Day when the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation and each person will sweat according to their deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421. A Day when the same relatives one stressed about and desperately tried to please, will flee from them. Chapter 80 Abasa, verses 33-37:

"But when there comes the Deafening Blast. On the Day a man will flee from his brother. And his mother and his father. And his wife and his children. For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him."

A Day when one will reflect over their deeds, after they witness Hell.
Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”

When one focuses on this Day, their worldly problem and difficulty will not seem like a big deal. This attitude will aid them in demonstrating patience from the onset of the difficulty and to evaluate and deal with it in an appropriate manner which minimizes their stress.

In addition, keeping one's focus on Judgement Day will also ensure they turn away, ignore and belittle anything which will not seem important on the Day of Judgement, which includes the difficulties and stresses one faces during their life. Instead, they will focus on the things which will be relevant on the Day of Judgement, such as demonstrating patience in the face of difficulties. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit].”

Perhaps this correct attitude was part of the reason why the magicians of Pharaoh, who after accepting faith, were not fazed or put off by the threats of physical torture given by Pharaoh, as they were focused on Judgement Day. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 49-50:

"[Pharaoh] said, "You believed him [i.e., Moses] before I gave you permission. Indeed, he is your leader who has taught you magic, but you are going to know. I will surely cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will surely crucify you all." They said, "No harm. Indeed, to our Lord we will return.""

Strengthening Faith - 106

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. When one observes the teachings of Islam and the life of others, they can clearly see that there are three ways people can use each blessing they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, and the consequences of each choice. The first way is to use the blessings one has been granted in sinful ways. This will lead to a potential punishment in both worlds. In this world, their blessings will become a curse for them and a cause of their difficulties and misery. For example, the one who raises their child on the unlawful, will find that their child becomes a source of misery and difficulty for them. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

The second way of using the blessings one has been granted is in ways which are considered vain by Islam. This involves using the blessings in ways which are not sinful and nor do they result in a good deed. Behaving in this manner will be a great regret for people in the hereafter, especially when they observe the reward given to those who used their blessings correctly. In addition, using one's blessings in vain ways may well prevent the scales of Judgement Day tipping in their favour. Using the blessings one has been granted in vain ways also results in stress and anxiety in this world. For example, the one who uses their time in vain ways often encounters more stress, such as arguments, than those who avoid using their time in vain ways. Those who seek more wealth than they need to

fulfill their responsibilities often stress more than those who only seek and utilise according to their needs.

The final way a person can use the worldly blessings they have been granted is in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact showing gratitude to Him and therefore leads to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

In addition, behaving in this manner is remembering Allah, the Exalted, and therefore leads to peace of mind and body. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace.”

The one who behaves in this manner has fulfilled the purpose of their creation and will therefore lead a good, purposeful and meaningful life in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Finally, even when this person faces difficulties they will be rightly guided to respond with patience and receive further blessings and reward. They will be like the patient under anesthesia who does not feel the pain of treatment they are being administered. Meaning, they may face difficulties but their heart will always be at peace.

To conclude, these are the three ways and consequences one can use the blessings they have been granted. It does not take a scholar to conclude which way a person should act upon.

Strengthening Faith - 107

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. People often confuse the things which they have no power over with the things they have control over and are responsible for. As a result of this confusion, they fail to adopt the correct mentality and behaviour thereby missing out on obtaining the peace of mind which Islam offers. Instead, their confusion causes them to adopt an unbalanced mental and physical state which causes them to swing from one extreme mood to another in a short space of time, which results in mental disorders, such stress, anxiety and depression.

One must understand certain things in order to avoid this outcome. There are two elements in one's life. The first are the things which are external and they have no control over them, such as falling sick. These things are connected to destiny and the divine will and cannot be averted or avoided. The second element is internal and is linked to one's behaviour. This element a person has complete control over and is what they will be judged on by Allah, the Exalted.

The confusion occurs when one fails to understand that they have control over their behaviour and are responsible for it, and as a result they fail to adopt a balanced state of mind whereby they do not become overly happy meaning, exultant, in times of ease and overly sad, meaning, grief, in times of difficulties. Instead, they fail to adopt control over their behaviour and instead treat it as if it is out of their control and a part of destiny, just like the external situations they face. As a result of failing to control themselves,

they become exultant over insignificant things and extremely upset over insignificant and petty issues. Whenever they recover from their extreme behaviour they simply shrug their shoulders and comment that such is life and that is the way it is. As a result, they do not improve their behaviour with time, nor learn from their experiences, as they do not take responsibility for their behaviour and instead place it with the things they have no control over. This is an incredibly rude and foolish attitude to adopt as one blames Allah, the Exalted, the One who decides destiny, for their bad behaviour and attitude, even though their behaviour is fully under their control.

When one adopts this attitude they will come to believe that swinging from one extreme mood to another is simply a norm in this world and that is how life was supposed to be lived. This is closer to a mentally unstable person's lifestyle than a balanced Muslim's life, a balance which Islam teaches.

To conclude, one must avoid confusing what they do not have control over with what they have full control over i.e. their behaviour and attitude. By differentiating between the two, a Muslim can and will learn from their experiences and with the support of Islamic knowledge, they will adopt a balanced state of mind whereby they avoid extreme moods. This leads to peace and mind in this world. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

"No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register, before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allāh, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult over what He has given you..."

Strengthening Faith - 108

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to differentiate between being steadfast in Islam and adopting stubbornness in Islam. Even though they can outwardly appear similar yet they are very different. Stubbornness in faith is the result of blind imitation and not learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. Blind imitation is disliked in Islam, as people have been created with a high mental ability and should therefore not act like cattle, who blindly follow each other. A Muslim must follow the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who strived to gain and act on Islamic knowledge. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

"Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me..."

Stubbornness in faith therefore does not lead to strong faith. This prevents one from remaining firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A stubborn Muslim may obey Allah, the Exalted, in certain cases but will ultimately fail to obey Him in others, as they do not possess the strong faith required to achieve this.

In addition, stubbornness in faith prevents one from improving their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, as they will not change for the better, if it means contradicting their habits. Whereas, steadfastness in Islam will encourage one to change and improve their behaviour every time they learn something new. For example, the stubborn Muslim will continue to offer their voluntary prayers at the Mosque even after they have been told that it is an established tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to offer one's voluntary prayers at home with the exception of the two cycles of prayer offered when entering the Mosque. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6113. A stubborn Muslim will even hold firmly on to practices which are not taken from the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even if they have to sacrifice acting on his traditions.

Steadfastness in faith on the other hand, is rooted in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. This attitude encourages one to change and improve their behaviour constantly, as they increase their knowledge. It leads to strong faith, which ensures they remain sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. This is therefore, the attitude a Muslim must adopt if they desire to achieve peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Strengthening Faith - 109

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Allah, the Exalted, guides those who sincerely try to obey Him. This involves using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who persistently disobey Him are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as persistent disobedience leads to corruption of the spiritual heart and one's actions.

This is similar to a person who is warned by a judge not to behave in an unlawful way but after the person persists on this behaviour the judge gives the order for them to be locked up in prison. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, has not wronged them they have only wronged themselves.

But it is important to note that as being abandoned in misguidance is a spiritual thing and therefore hidden to mankind, it is important for Muslims not to assume certain people have reached this point. Instead they should think positively about all people and therefore sincerely practically aid them in reforming their belief and behaviour.

Allah, the Exalted, has created human beings with the best possible capabilities. He gave them knowledge and power to differentiate between

good and evil and even placed in them an innate inclination to like what is good and to dislike and avoid what is evil. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Allah, the Exalted, has also granted mankind free will to choose between good and evil. This choice plays a role in enhancing or diminishing a person's natural faculties of reason. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

“He has succeeded who purifies it [the spiritual heart – the greatest faculty of reason]. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”

When a person chooses a path of goodness their natural potential develops and Allah, the Exalted, grants them further support in their efforts. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways...”

But if one follows their evil desires and chooses the evil path gradually their spiritual hearts will become engrossed with darkness and no good will remain therein. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334. If a person fails to repent then the main verse under discussion comes into effect. This person becomes so engrossed in evil that they find joy in their evil mentality and actions. They absolutely hate anything good.

Strengthening Faith - 110

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. The Holy Quran possesses an uncountable amount of qualities which separates it from any other worldly book. This aspect of the Holy Quran is so intense that it cannot even be explained or discussed over countless lifetimes. But a few of these qualities will be mentioned here. First of all, in the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, has given an open challenge to the entire universe (not just people) and not only a challenge to those who were present when this divine revelation was revealed but to all of creation till the end of time. The challenge being if the people believed the Holy Quran was not a divine revelation from Allah, the Exalted, then they should produce a chapter that can rival a chapter of the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 23:

“And if you are in some doubt, concerning what We sent down upon Our special devotee, then bring one chapter like it, and call upon all your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.”

There is no book on the entire planet that can and has given this type of open challenge. But over 1400 years ago the Holy Quran gave this challenge to the entire universe and to this day this challenge has not been won by the non-Muslims nor will it ever be God willing.

Another quality of the Holy Quran is that it stated the outcome of future events. But the more amazing thing about these statements is that the outcomes seemed impossible at the time. For example chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 28:

“It is He Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth that he may make it prevail over all other religions And Sufficient is Allah as witness.”

When this verse was revealed the entire city of Mecca was Islam so when the people of Mecca heard this verse, unfortunately for them, they believed that Islam was too feeble and would therefore not survive long and certainly would not spread beyond the borders of Mecca let alone the entire world. But within a some years Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled this promise.

Another example of how the Holy Quran prophesied a future event which was unimaginable at the time is found in chapter 30 Ar Rum, verses 2-5:

“The Romans have been subdued. In the nearby land and after their subjugation they will soon overcome. In a few years. The command is of Allah only before and after. And on that day the believers shall rejoice. With the help of Allah, He helps whom He pleases. And He is the Might, and Merciful.”

These verses of the Holy Quran were revealed during a time where the Romans (Christians) were at war with the Persians (Fire worshippers). This war has been confirmed by many authentic historic books. At this particular time the Persians were on the verge of winning the war. At one point Rome itself was surrounded by the Persians. But Allah, the Exalted, stated that the Romans would eventually reign victorious. The non-Muslims of Mecca who themselves were idol worshippers favoured the Persians and agreed with the majority that it was impossible for the Romans to win. But Allah, the Exalted, as always proved these verses true and allowed the Romans victory.

A final example which appeals to the scientists of the world is seen in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 33:

“And it is He Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Each one is floating in a circumference.”

For centuries scientists have fought over theories on how exactly the solar system is arranged e.g. whether the sun remains still and the Earth rotates around or vice versa. Only relatively recently it has been proven by scientists from all different faiths and backgrounds that each object; sun, moon and the Earth all rotate on their own axes and rotate around each other in a set orbit. But Allah, the Exalted, declared this over 1400 years ago. All the science related verses of the Holy Quran are slowly being proven by scientists today. This is a huge piece of evidence that proves

that the Holy Quran are the words of the One and only true God, Allah, the Exalted, who has created this universe and everything in it, because only a Creator can truly explain his creations.

Even though many commands of the Holy Quran may not be understood by people does not mean they are incorrect. Certain verses of the Holy Quran whose wisdom was hidden to man became apparent when society reached a certain level of development. As the whole Holy Quran is a book of wisdom and guidance it must be accepted irrespective if one understands its commands or not. This situation is just like a child who is suffering from a cold and desires ice cream but is not given it by their parent. The child will continue to cry without understanding the wisdom behind but those that possess knowledge will agree with the parent even though outwardly it appears as if the decision of the parent is wronging the child.

When studying the Holy Quran one will realize that it contains different levels of superiority through both obvious and subtle meanings that it discusses. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 1:

“...[This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Aware.”

The expressions in it are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a simple straight forward way. Its verses are extremely eloquent and no other text can surpass it. The Holy Quran also mentioned the stories of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commanded every type of good and forbade every type of evil, those that affect an individual and those that affect an entire society so that peace and security can spread throughout homes and society. The Holy Quran is free from exaggerations, lies or falsehood unlike poems and stories. All the verses, whether short or long, in the Holy Quran are beneficial. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran different important lessons can be learned from it. Unlike all other books the Holy Quran does not become boring when it is repeatedly recited and a seeker of truth never gets fed up of studying it. The Holy Quran not only provides warnings and promises but supports them with unshakeable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses anything which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides an easy and practical way of implementing it. It encourages one to fulfil the purpose of their creation and prepare for the eternal hereafter in a simple yet profound way. It makes the straight path clear and appealing to the one who desires true success in both worlds. The knowledge within it is timeless and can be applied to every society and age. It is a healing for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It is the cure for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever encounter. One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly in order to understand its all encompassing benefits. Centuries have passed yet not even a single letter has been edited in the Holy Quran as Allah, the Exalted, promised to safeguard it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

This is undoubtedly the greatest and timeless miracle of Allah, the Exalted, granted to His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the only one who will benefit from it is the one who seeks the truth whereas the seekers of their desires will only find it difficult to hear and follow. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Strengthening Faith - 111

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. There are two types of divine revelation. One are the exact words of Allah, the Exalted, which is represented by the Holy Quran. The other is the inspiration given to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by Allah, the Exalted. This is called Hadith or narrations, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not speak out of his own desire. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 3:

“Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination.”

The Holy Quran cannot be understood correctly without the Hadiths/traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as the Hadith explain the verses in their proper context e.g. why they were revealed, what are they referring to, etc. This is why it is obligatory to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

“...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from...”

And chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...”

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger...”

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“Whoever obeys the Messenger has truly obeyed Allah...”

Another reason why Hadiths are needed is that the Holy Quran does not explain everything so therefore one is forced to turn to the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, the three pillars of Islam: Obligatory charity, the Holy Pilgrimage and the obligatory prayers. The obligatory prayers, which is the central pillar of Islam, is not explained in the Holy Quran in detail, such as the way to offer

the prayer is not mentioned at all in the Holy Quran. The timings are vaguely indicated but not explained in detail.

The exact amount of the obligatory charity which is due is not clarified in the Holy Quran, only the groups which are entitled to it are. But even then one must turn to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fully understand the different groups.

Only some parts of the Holy Pilgrimage are very briefly mentioned in the Holy Quran. But the precise order of activities or what to do at each place is not mentioned in the Holy Quran.

Without the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, these three out of five pillars of Islam cannot be completed correctly.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, preserved the Holy Quran and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

“It is certainly We Who have revealed the Reminder, and it is certainly We Who will preserve it.”

The word Quran is not mentioned in this verse. Instead, reminder is mentioned, which includes both types of divine revelation: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The very people who transmitted the Holy Quran to the following generations, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, are the same people who transmitted the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If a person rejects one then it casts doubt on the other.

Finally, the people who understood Islam the best are the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and they made it clear that the Holy Quran cannot be correctly implemented without the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Without these traditions it becomes easy to misinterpret and take the verses of the Holy Quran out of their proper context. It is the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which clarify the verses in order to show what they really mean. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the practical model of the Holy Quran.

Strengthening Faith - 112

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. People have often conceived Allah, the Exalted, to be similar to those worldly rulers who immerse themselves in a life of ease in their grand palaces. Such rulers are normally far removed from their subjects. To all intents and purposes they are well beyond the direct access of their subjects. The only way for their subjects to reach them is through the chosen and favourite courtiers. And even if a subject succeeds in conveying their pleadings through a courtier these rulers are often too arrogant to directly respond to such pleadings. This is one aspect of the function of a courtier - to communicate to a ruler the pleadings of his subjects and also to communicate to the subjects the response of the ruler.

Since Allah, the Exalted, was often conceived in the image of such worldly rulers many people fell prey to the false belief that Allah, the Exalted, is above the reach of ordinary human beings. This belief spread further because many evil people found it profitable to propagate such a notion. Because of this the general public felt Allah, the Exalted, could only be approached through powerful intermediaries and intercessors. The only way that a person's prayer could reach Allah, the Exalted, and be answered by Him was to approach Him through one of these holy people. It was therefore, considered necessary to bestow gifts to these religious personalities who supposedly enjoyed the privilege of conveying a person's prayers to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 61:

“And to Thamūd [We sent] their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said, "O my people, worship Allāh; you have no deity other than Him. He has produced you from the earth and settled you in it, so ask forgiveness of Him and then repent to Him. Indeed, my Lord is near and responsive."”

The Holy Prophet Salih, peace be upon him, struck at the root of this ignorant system. This he achieved by emphasizing two facts: that Allah, the Exalted, is extremely close to His creatures and that He answers their prayers. Thus, he refuted many misconceptions about Allah, the Exalted: that He is far away, withdrawn from human beings and that He does not answer their prayers if they are to directly approach Him. Allah, the Exalted, no doubt, is transcendent and yet He is extremely close to every person. Everyone will find Him just beside themselves. Everyone can whisper to Him the innermost desires of their heart. Everyone can address their prayers to Allah, the Exalted, both in public and in private, verbally or secretly. Moreover, Allah, the Exalted, answers the prayers of all His creatures directly. The purpose of spiritual guides is to teach their students how to understand and act on the teachings of Islam and because of this they deserve respect. But their role is not to stand in between their students and Allah, the Exalted, by claiming that the only way to reach Him and get His attention is to go through them. This attitude completely contradicts the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Strengthening Faith - 113

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. The obligatory prayers, which are central pillar of Islam, are more than a few movements. They are in fact a representation of Judgement Day. Each position of the prayer reflects a specific state on Judgement Day. Standing upright during the prayer is how people will stand when they are being judged by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 83 Al Mutaaffifin, verses 4-6:

“Do they not think that they will be resurrected. For a tremendous Day The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?”

Therefore, the one who is upright with Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and are upright to people, by treating them in ways they themselves desire to be treated by people, will find standing in front of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day easy.

Bowing in the prayer will ensure a person is not labelled on Judgement Day as one of those who did not bow during their life on Earth when they were commanded to bow. Chapter 77 Al Mursalat, verse 48:

“And when it is said to them, “Bow [in prayer],” they do not bow.”

This bowing includes one’s internal, verbal and practical submission to Allah, the Exalted, during every situation and moment. The one who fails to behave in this manner may well be accused of failing to bow to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day.

The sitting position is how people will kneel before Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day, out of extreme fear. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 28:

“And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], “Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do.””

The one who kneels before the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will find the kneeling on Judgement Day easy.

Finally, those who failed to prostrate themselves to Allah, the Exalted, in this world, in the prayer and in every aspect of their practical life, by using the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Him, will not be able to

prostrate to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verses 42-43:

"On the Day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so. Their eyes humbled, humiliation will cover them. And they used to be invited to prostration while they were sound."

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4919, that on Judgement Day those who used to prostrate in prayer for the sake of showing off will not be able to prostrate on Judgement Day, as their backs will become too stiff.

When one prays while bearing all this in mind, then they will return to their everyday activities with an intention to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the worldly blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, so that they obtain peace of mind and body in both worlds and successfully overcome the difficulties of Judgement Day. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Finally, the five obligatory prayers being spread over the day, ensures that whenever one forgets Judgement Day, the next prayer will remind them of it and the importance of practically preparing for it.

When one take these things, and more, into context, then the prayer has a much deeper meaning than simply completing a few acts of motion, a few times a day.

Strengthening Faith - 114

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the major reasons the faith of Muslims has weakened over time is due to how they perceive faith and Islam. The righteous predecessors understood that Islam was a complete code of conduct which directly influenced every aspect of one's life, every situation they face and every blessing they were granted by Allah, the Exalted. They therefore learnt and implemented this code of conduct from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As a result, they obtained peace of mind and body despite the tests and difficulties they faced. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But with the passing of time, Muslims began to perceive Islam as nothing but a few daily, weekly and annual rituals and acts of worship. This encouraged them to deal with every situation they faced and every blessing they were granted according to the standards set by culture, fashion and society. This caused them to reduce the Holy Quran to a pleasant melody which does not need to be understood or acted upon. And they reduced it to something which is recited in order to obtain worldly things, such as a spouse and child. This attitude also encouraged them to misuse the

blessings they were granted. As a result, their faith became nothing but an empty shell, which is adorned by acts of worship but has no practical effect on their lives. This attitude is one of the main reasons why Muslims, who fulfill the basic duties of Islam, still fail to obtain peace of mind and body.

If this attitude persists, then just like the former nations who eventually abandoned their few acts of worship, as they were nothing but empty practices, so will the Muslim nation. Then they will call themselves non-practicing Muslims. This only leads to difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

A Muslim must therefore avoid this attitude and outcome by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they adopt the correct attitude and code of conduct in every aspect of their life. Only through this, will one find peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

Strengthening Faith - 115

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to avoid falling into a mentality which prevents one from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This mentality involves comparing oneself to other people who appear worse than them in obeying Allah, the Exalted. This mentality only encourages one to belittle their own disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, as they observe the greater sins of others. This attitude also encourages laziness, as one will not urge themselves to improve their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and their behaviour towards the creation, when they observe the sins of others. They will believe they are doing a good job, even though they are barely fulfilling the basic duties of Islam towards Allah, the Exalted, and people, as they constantly observe people who appear worse than them. One must never forget that one's judgement on the Day of Judgement will not be based on a comparison with other people. The benchmark for all people on the Day of Judgement is the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Meaning, the actions of each person will be compared to these sources of guidance, not the actions of other people. So a thief will not escape punishment on Judgement Day by claiming they never killed anyone, just like the many killers who will be present on the Day of Judgement. As the benchmark on Judgement Day is the two sources of guidance, similarly, the benchmark in this world is also these two sources of guidance. A Muslim must therefore avoid the foolish attitude of comparing themselves to people who appear worse than them and instead compare their actions to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to correct themselves if they desire peace and success in both worlds, as comparing oneself to worse people may make them feel better but it will only lead to

difficulties in this world and a difficult accountability and a potential punishment in the hereafter. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Strengthening Faith - 116

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Some Muslims have adopted a lazy attitude which is important to avoid. It is to refrain from striving in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead rely on others to supplicate on their behalf while they are alive and after they have died. This was not the attitude of those who understood Islam better than anyone else; the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. None of them resorted to laziness by asking the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to supplicate on their behalf. They instead strove hard in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to supplicate on their behalf. If supplication from a righteous elder was only enough, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have sacrificed everything they were granted for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 99:

"But among the bedouins are some who believe in Allāh and the Last Day and consider what they spend as means of nearness to Allāh and of [obtaining] invocations of the Messenger. Unquestionably, it is a means of nearness for them. Allāh will admit them to His mercy. Indeed, Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful."

Even if one asks others, who appear pious to supplicate on their behalf, it will not benefit them until they strive to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, first. Adopting this lazy attitude mocks the concept of supplication and mocking any aspect of Islam will not lead to a good outcome.

Just like a sane person does not expect to achieve worldly success through someone's supplication, such as passing an exam, without putting in practical effort, neither will they achieve religious blessings, such as peace of mind and body in both worlds, without striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even if everyone supplicates on their behalf to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 39:

"And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives."

Strengthening Faith - 117

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In this time of open tribulations which Muslims are constantly bombarded with, some often state that the key to escaping them is to move away, such as moving to an Islamic nation, or to self-isolate oneself and their family, such as homeschooling. Even though these possible solutions are not bad, as they can help to a certain degree in escaping the temptations and tribulations of this world, but they are not the main solution. The issue with adopting an escape type mentality is that unless one moves into an isolated cave with their family and never emerges, it is not possible to constantly escape these temptations and tribulations. Sooner or later, a Muslim will have to face them in some shape or form. For example, there is no doubt that single gender schools do better in their results than mix schools, yet a day will certainly come when a student will encounter the opposite gender during their life. In this day and age of social media, one does not even need to leave their bedroom in order to fall into evil temptations and tribulations. Even if a family moves to an Islamic country, which seems impossible to find nowadays, none the less, they will still face these tribulations and temptations, as every country and city has their own kind. Does the pilgrim and traveler not see the injustice and unfairness that even occurs in Mecca and Medina?

It is often observed that when Muslims who come from more traditional countries travel to the west, they often fall deeper into sinful temptations and tribulations than the Muslims who were born and raised in the west. This is because when these foreign Muslims, who have lived a more restricted and traditional life, enter the west, the tribulations and temptations hit them like a tidal wave and as a result they slip up more

easily than those who are born and raised amongst these tribulations and temptations. Therefore, adopting the escape type mentality is simply not practical in this day and age.

The main key to successfully overcoming these tribulations and temptations, as indicated by Islam, is adopting strong faith through learning and acting on Islamic knowledge and teaching this attitude to the next generation. Strong faith will ensure a Muslim remains firm in the face of all temptations and tribulations, irrespective of where they are, by continuing to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This education will teach the young Muslims the wisdoms behind the prohibitions found in Islam. Adopting an escape type mentality will not provide this education, it will only provide some restriction from accessing these temptations and tribulations. Similar to a criminal who is temporarily restricted in prison. The moment the criminal is released, they will return to their life of crime until they are educated against it. Similarly, a young Muslim will have natural desires which are fueled by these worldly temptations and tribulations, and without this education they will most likely fail, when they are tested.

When a person is simply told of a prohibition without the wisdoms behind it, they are less likely to adhere to the prohibition and are more likely to be tricked into it. Whereas, the one who is aware of the wisdoms behind the prohibition is more likely to adhere to it. For example, the one who has the

knowledge of the negative aspects of alcohol, such as the damage down to one's physical and mental health, it's strong connection with crimes, arguments, fights and assaults, it's financial effect on people and the other negative consequences of becoming an addict, such as destroying one's relationships and life, is more likely to stay away from it than the one who knows the prohibition but does not know the wisdoms behind it.

To conclude, a Muslim should take practical steps so that they and their family avoid tribulations and evil temptations but they should know that the main step to achieve this is education; learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that one understands the wisdoms behind avoiding the prohibitions of Islam and so that they strengthen their faith. This will ensure they continue to obey Allah, the Exalted, under all circumstances, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verses 39-40:

"[Iblees] said, 'My Lord, because You have put me in error, I will surely make [disobedience] attractive to them [i.e., mankind] on earth, and I will mislead them all. Except, among them, Your sincere servants.'"

Strengthening Faith - 118

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the main reasons people struggle to obtain peace of mind and body in this world is due to incorrectly evaluating the value of worldly things, as their definition of good and bad, success and failure is incorrect. A business owner will become bankrupt if they cannot correctly evaluate the value of the merchandise they buy and sell. Similarly, the person who incorrectly evaluates the value of worldly things will misplace their efforts and prioritize things incorrectly, thereby causing themselves stress and anxiety in both worlds. Most people define success and failure, good and bad, based on definitions given by culture, fashion and social media and as a result they incorrectly determine the value of things. For example, according to these standards, having many properties is a good thing whereas having a few worldly possessions is a bad thing, even though this is not true at all. Those who possess many worldly things, such as properties, are often the most stressed and anxiety ridden people in the world. A classic example of this is Pharaoh, one of the richest and most influential men to ever exist, as opposed to the one who did not possess many worldly things: the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. It does not take a genius to figure out who was granted peace of mind and body in both worlds.

Incorrectly evaluating things causes one to allow culture, fashion and social media to drive their life. If one allows the wrong person in the driver seat of their car, they will not take them to the correct destination: peace of mind and body in both worlds. As a result, a Muslim places their faith in the backseat or even in the boot of the car, and only turns to it during their few acts of worship and rituals.

But if one desires peace of mind and body in both worlds, they must choose the correct driver so that they reach the correct destination: peace of mind and body in both worlds. The correct driver is Islam. When one lives by the definitions of success and failure, good and bad, given by Islam, they will correctly evaluate the real value of worldly things and therefore place their efforts in the correct place and use the resources they have been granted correctly, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, the Controller of hearts, which is the abode of peace, will then grant them peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Strengthening Faith - 119

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. The Devil tries to misguide people in countless different ways. Knowing about his traps can aid a person to avoid them. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 6:

"Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you; so take him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be among the companions of the Blaze."

One of his biggest aims is to put one off from remembering their death, grave and their Final Judgement. He knows remembering death encourages one to prepare for it, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, encouraged Muslims to often remember death, as it is the destroyer of pleasures. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4258. Therefore, the Devil tries to prevent one from remembering death by reminding them of their never-ending worldly preoccupations so that they fail to prepare for it adequately.

If one happens to remember their death, then he diverts them to thinking about it from the perspective of other people. Meaning, a person will think about the effects of their death on other people, such as their children.

Even though worrying about the future of one's children is not a bad thing, nonetheless, a Muslim should never forget that the Provider and Sustainer of their children is none other than Allah, the Exalted. He simply uses the parent for this process and He can easily replace the parent with some other means. Secondly, thinking about death from other people's perspective, diverts a person's attention from preparing for their death. Instead, they will be encouraged to work harder in this world in order to obtain and hoard more wealth and properties for their dependents, out of fear of leaving them poor and needy, if they happen to die. This again distracts them from practically preparing for their own death. One must note, there is a big difference between reasonably saving wealth for one's children and going overboard, which most Muslims do.

One must push past these distractions set up by the Devil and instead truly reflect on their death from their own point of view, so that they practically prepare for it, their lonely and dark grave, where all their relatives, friends and worldly possessions will abandon them, and for their Final Judgement, when they will face the consequences of their actions, alone. Chapter 80 Abasa, verses 34-37:

"On the Day a man will flee from his brother. And his mother and his father. And his wife and his children. For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him."

Perhaps through this reflection one will avoid this particular trap of the Devil and practically prepare for these inevitable stages of existence.

Strengthening Faith - 120

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is commonly observed around the world how many people, such as politicians, criticize Islam and its different aspects in order to put off Muslims from acting on it and non-Muslims from accepting it. The truth of the matter is that their problem is not with Islam or a part of it, such as the dress code of women and men. Their issue with Islam is the fact that it is not merely a set of rituals and practices but a complete code of life which affects every aspect of one's life, such as their personal, social, financial, family and work life. But as these people desire to live according to their desires, the life of animals, and not a higher moral code of conduct, it pains them to observe Muslims adhering to the code of conduct set by Islam, as the practicing Muslims make them look like nothing except animals, that only live to fulfil their desires. In order to mask their animalistic behaviour, they attempt to punch holes into the code of conduct Islam advocates, even though anyone with a little common sense sees straight through their poor attempt, as Islam is a logical, flawless and upright way of life. For example, these people often criticise the dress code Islam commands women to adhere to. Even though countless women, especially those living in the west, desire to dress according to the standard set by Islam out of their own free will, yet these people insist they must band Islamic dress code, as it oppresses women. Anyone with common sense can clearly see that preventing a Muslim woman who desires to dress according to Islamic teachings is oppression in itself. So they seek to rescue an oppressed person by oppressing them further. These people also claim these women have been brainwashed, which is highly insulting, as they are claiming women are weak minded. Finally, it is strange how these people have an issue with the Islamic dress code yet they have no problem or objection to any other dress code. There is no institution, major business or organisation that does not have a dress code, such as educational institutions, hospitals, the army, the police force, the retail sector, businesses and even the political buildings, which these

politicians who criticise Islam work at. They never criticize the dress code of all these places, which encompasses the majority of the world. This makes it clear that they only target Islam and its different aspects in order to shield themselves from being labelled animals, as they only wish to fulfill their own desires and not live by a superior code of conduct.

A Muslim must never be fooled by people like this. They should instead strengthen their faith through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that they remain firm on sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in the face of foolish criticism. Obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Strengthening Faith - 121

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is commonly understood that a person will receive in this world according to their efforts. For example, the student who does not study so hard might pass their exams, yet they will probably not obtain as much worldly success, like a good job, as the student who studied harder and therefore obtained a better grade. Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, rewards people according to their efforts, not just their verbal declaration of faith and good intention. For example, when describing those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter, the first blessing mentioned in the following verse is not high ranks in Paradise or huge palaces, it is instead rest. Chapter 56 Al Waqi'ah, verses 88-89:

"And if he was of those brought near [to Allāh]. Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure."

Those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are granted rest before anything else because they tired themselves in His obedience in this world. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Therefore, just like one typically receives worldly success according to their efforts in this world, similarly they will receive spiritual success in this world and in the next according to their efforts and intentions. Therefore, each Muslim must decide how much spiritual success they desire to obtain in this world and in the next and strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, accordingly.

Strengthening Faith - 122

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the major things which prevents a Muslim from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the passive and active criticism and ridicule they face from those who do not believe in Allah, the Exalted, or from the Muslims who possess weak faith. These two groups belittle the devotion and obedience of the devoted Muslims who choose to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of using them in ways pleasing to themselves. They overcome their desires and choose to follow the code of conduct set out by Islam, instead of living according to their desires. Those who fail to appreciate the value of obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves peace of mind and body in both worlds, believe these devoted Muslims are insane and as a result of their attitude, they are losing out from enjoying the luxuries of the world. Their example is like two people who are presented with a meal which appears delicious. But only one of them, the one who possesses insight, realizes the food is poisoned. They warn the other person not to eat the poisoned food but as they are intoxicated with the love of worldly things, they ignore this advice and eat the food while believing the advisor is a fool for not enjoying the delicious food.

The one who fails to gain this insight will be put off from practically obeying Allah, the Exalted, when they are passively or actively criticized by others.

A Muslim must always remember that peace of mind and body in both worlds lies only in obeying. Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, disobeying Him, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, only leads to trouble in both worlds. This is quite evident when one observes those drowned in worldly desires and lusts. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Secondly, A Muslim must strive to gain the insight which convinces them of this truth. This is obtained when one learns and acts on the teachings of Islam and when they observe the consequences of the choices made by

others, such as how those who drown themselves in worldly luxuries often face anxiety, stress, depression and suicidal tendencies. This insight will ensure one maintains their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 212:

"Beautified for those who disbelieve is the life of this world, and they ridicule those who believe. But those who fear Allāh are above them on the Day of Resurrection. And Allāh gives provision to whom He wills without account."

Strengthening Faith - 123

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. A part of faith, which is a test in itself, is that when one obeys Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they are not guaranteed to receive tangible benefits, such as an obvious increase in wealth. The benefits associated with obeying Allah, the Exalted, are often more subtle and experienced in one's spiritual heart, such as obtaining peace of mind. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The one who possesses weak faith often seeks tangible benefits from Allah, the Exalted, such as good health, a nice house and a good career. As Islam does not guarantee these things, the Devil often puts off people from faith entirely or from at least acting on their faith, as outlined earlier. This reality is a test which a Muslim must pass successfully by obtaining strong faith. This involves learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, so that one becomes sure of the countless benefits one obtains in both worlds through obeying Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, one should always use their common sense by understanding that real benefit is often not tangible, such as a positive change in one's mental health and wellbeing. A person who has the world at their feet will happily give it up for this intangible benefit. A Muslim must therefore not be fooled into seeking tangible benefits from Allah, the Exalted, as they have not been guaranteed. Doing so can even push one further away from His obedience, when one does not receive the tangible benefit they desired. This leads to a loss in both worlds. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

Strengthening Faith - 124

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. The Holy Quran describes two types of signs which point out the truthfulness of Islam. One type of signs are the verses of the Holy Quran and the other types of signs are found within the creation. Every person is urged to reflect on both of these types of signs in order to deduce for themselves the truthful nature of Islam. For example, when one reflects on the multiple perfect systems within the universe, such as the perfect distance the Earth is from the Sun, the perfect density of the oceans, which allow ships to sail on them and sea life to thrive within them, the water cycle, and many more, they will deduce the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. All of these signs, when recognized, strengthen one's faith in the different aspects of Islam, such as the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, the resurrection, etc.

Often, these signs within the universe are collaborated by science, which further strengthens one's belief in them. Even though Islam does not need to be proven through science, none the less, one can appreciate when this occurs.

For example, scientists have proven that when a star reaches the end of its life, it expands and becomes red. Interestingly, on Judgement Day, which is the end of the universe, the colour of the sky will appear reddish, which would occur if the Sun became red in colour. Chapter 55 Ar Rahman, verse 37:

"When the sky is torn apart and turns crimson, like red hide."

In addition, on Judgement Day the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864. This movement of the Sun can occur when it expands in size, during the end of its life.

Scientists have also deduced that the universe is constantly expanding. One can imagine that when an object continues to be stretched and eventually reaches its breaking point, the object will be torn apart and whatever is within it will be scattered in different directions. This is how the end of the universe has been described in the Holy Quran. Chapter 82 Al Infitar, verses 1-2:

"When the sky will be cleft asunder. And when the stars have fallen and scattered."

It is amazing how science has agreed on the teachings of Islam which was revealed over 1400 years ago.

A Muslim must pay attention to both types of signs so that they strengthen their faith. This will ensure they remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Ignoring these signs only leads to weak faith and misusing the blessings one has been granted. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 105:

"How many a sign there are in the heavens and the Earth, which they pass by and they are heedless to them."

This leads to difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Strengthening Faith - 125

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the different types of Muslims in this world and their behaviour. According to this thought Muslims can be split into three groups. The first group are the best and consist of the Muslims who hand their lives and possessions over to Allah, the Exalted, thereby fulfilling the purpose of their creation. They only take from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities and dedicate the rest of their efforts in gaining and acting on knowledge so that they can strengthen their faith and gain the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Outwardly they may seem as if they do not enjoy life in this world but in reality they obtain more peace in it than the other types of Muslims. Their reckoning on Judgment Day will be easy through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

The second group consists of those Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties and whatever traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they come across without putting extra effort in obtaining or acting on Islamic knowledge. They dedicate the majority of their efforts to gaining and enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. As they avoid the unlawful it is hoped they will gain the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in the next world. But as they indulged in the material world their accountability will be long. And as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6536, whoever has their deeds scrutinised will be punished. Standing and witnessing the horrors of the Day of Judgment for an extremely long time because of one's enjoyment in the world is a form of punishment.

The final group of Muslims are the worse type as they do not dedicate their lives to Allah, the Exalted, like the best group but neither do they enjoy the lawful pleasures of the material world like the second group. These people instead hoard the worldly things they obtain without fulfilling their lawful desires. This attitude causes them to stand between the two other groups meaning, they will not enjoy the lawful things of this world nor will they have an easy reckoning on the Day of Judgment because of the worldly things they obtained.

It is therefore important for Muslims not to belong to this final group as this is a clear loss. A Muslim should try to belong to the best group but if they really cannot manage this then they should at least join the second group by fulfilling their obligatory duties, enjoy only the lawful pleasures of this world and hope for the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

Strengthening Faith - 126

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. When one observes the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will clearly see that he was tested every step of his life, even though he was the most beloved creation of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a test and difficulty is not a curse or a sign of a wretched life. It is in fact an opportunity for a person to shine and accumulate an abundant reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

One must bear this in mind whenever they face tests and difficulties so that they can remain patient and grateful, like he did.

Furthermore, even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, faced continuous difficulties and tests yet throughout every stage his heart was at peace. This peace was obtained as he persistently used the blessings he was granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”

But the one who fails to imitate him will find nothing but a dark and suffocating life, even if they have the world at their feet. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

“But whoever turns away from My Reminder will certainly have a miserable life...”

Therefore, using the blessings one has been granted correctly is the difference between obtaining peace of mind and a miserable life, even if one faces difficulties or times of ease.

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon

him, dedicated his life to guiding mankind towards the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. It is important for Muslims to follow in the footsteps of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who remained steadfast on his teachings after his passing. All Muslims desire his company in the hereafter but they will only receive it if they follow his path. A person will not end up with their companion who journeyed along a specific path if they journey down a different path. Similarly, Muslims will not join the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in the hereafter if they walk a path other than his. This is only achieved by learning and acting on his blessed life and teachings. This is the reason why none of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, simply declared belief with their words and refrained from practically following him, as they knew this attitude would prevent them from joining him in the hereafter. This was in fact the attitude of the other nations who claim to love their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, yet fail to practically follow them. This is why they will not join their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, in the hereafter.

Also, when observing the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and by extension the lives of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, one understands that the only way a person can have a meaningful, valuable and purposeful existence is by fulfilling the purpose of their creation. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

This is only achieved when one practically obeys Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, which is explained by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Simply declaring faith verbally without supporting it with physical actions is like a vase which looks beautiful outwardly but is hollow inside. This will not lead to a meaningful existence in this life, even if one ends up in Paradise in the hereafter. This is hinted in a Hadith found in At Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, Hadith 182, Volume 20, which warns that the only thing a person will regret in Paradise are the times during their life on Earth when they did not remember Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, the times during their life they did not fulfil their purpose of creation by correctly using the blessings they were granted. This is the reason why many Muslims, who only fulfill the basic obligatory duties, still feel a void in their lives, a void that nothing can fulfill except embracing one's purpose completely and practically.

In addition, generally speaking, people become pleased when they inherit worldly things, such as wealth from others. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not leave behind wealth for people to inherit. He, like the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, left behind knowledge. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223. Therefore, Muslims must take a share of this inheritance if they desire to be his true heirs.

Finally, the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the perfect example of how a Muslim must fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation. He is the practical representation of the Holy Quran.

Therefore, Muslims must study and act on his blessed life in order to fulfil their duties correctly. Success is not possible without this. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

And chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”

And chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Strengthening Faith - 127

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Countless lessons which effects a Muslim's religious and worldly life can be learned from the Holy Quran. But the first thing to note is that it will only benefit someone who fulfils its three aspects with sincerity. The first aspect is sincerely reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to sincerely act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One of the main teachings of the Holy Quran is for people to understand and strive to fulfil the purpose of their creation namely, to prepare for their meeting with Allah, the Exalted on Judgment Day.

In respect to a non-Muslim, when one fails to recognize this purpose they will not understand why they were created and placed on this Earth. This will cause them to incorrectly prioritize the things and people in their life. They will give importance to things which are not so important. They will end up dedicating their lives to things, which in respect to the bigger picture, are pointless. Their eating, drinking, happiness and sadness will revolve around these things. Some will reach such a low level that even other non-Muslims will declare that their life is aimless and has no real purpose or meaning. For example, many dedicate their lives and their efforts to drama, entertainment, sports, animals, plants and their careers. Even though dedicating one's efforts towards a lawful career is a good thing yet it must never become one's ultimate aim in life. This type of

person will not fulfil their purpose and instead lead an aimless and empty life. They will misuse the blessings they have been granted which prevents them from obtaining peace of mind and body. This is one of the main reasons why people who have obtained much worldly success end up depressed and suicidal. The one who believes their life is valuable and has meaning will never contemplate suicide. This contemplation in itself is proof that the lives of these types of people are aimless, even if they obtained much worldly success, as they did not understand nor fulfil the purpose of their creation. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 19:

“And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient.”

And chapter 20 Taha, Verse 124:

“But whoever turns away from My Remembrance will certainly have a miserable life...”

In respect, to Muslims who only fulfil the basic obligatory duties of Islam without dedicating any effort towards studying and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will fail to truly understand their purpose of creation and their purpose on this Earth, as this cannot be understood through the basic obligatory duties. As a result they will dedicate less than

an hour of a day to preparing for their meeting with Allah, the Exalted, as the obligatory duties do not take long to complete. Even this, in most cases, is based on blind imitation of others such as their family. They will not truly understand why they fulfil these duties because of a lack of knowledge and weakness of faith.

Without the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, their focus will be solely on this world and enjoying its blessings, as they see nothing except this world. Then in this respect, there is not much difference between them and non-Muslims as their aspirations, hopes, fears, desires, aims and purpose will be the same. This is obvious when one observes these types of Muslims and their activities in between their obligatory duties. This does not mean they will go to Hell. In fact, as they fulfilled their obligatory duties and avoided the major sins it is hoped they will obtain Paradise. But because of this attitude, meaning, failing to understand and work towards their purpose, they will never find true peace in this world as they will not use their worldly blessings in the correct way, even if they use them in lawful ways, as their whole focus is solely on this world and its enjoyments, as they see nothing except this world. Chapter 20 Taha, Verse 124:

“But whoever turns away from My Remembrance will certainly have a miserable life...”

This remembrance involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is only possible when one

understands their own purpose and the purpose of the worldly blessings they have been granted.

Failing to behave in this manner is the main reason why many Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties often complain about mental problems such as depression, as they have not remembered Allah, the Exalted, in the correct way, which leads to peace in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace.”

Even if these Muslims end up in Paradise, because of their behaviour they completely missed the point of why they were put on this Earth. Their example is that of students who are set a mock exam by their teacher. Some students work diligently to prepare for it, whereas other students do not take it seriously and barely revise for it. Even if both types of students pass the exam the teacher will only be pleased with those who prepared for it, as they alone have understood the purpose of the mock exam. Its purpose was to put the students in the right frame of mind so that they are ready to tackle their real exams. Those who failed to prepare for their mock exams might have passed but they completely missed the point and purpose of the mock exam. This is the example of the Muslims who fail to understand the purpose of being on this Earth but through blind imitation of others they end up in Paradise. They are like a beautifully decorated vase which is hollow inside. Due to their lowly worldly aspirations they do not achieve the great station and purpose they were granted by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 95 At Tin, verses 4-6:

“We have certainly created man in the best of stature. Then We return him to the lowest of the low. Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds...”

This prevents them from obtaining peace in this world, as the one who possesses lowly aspirations will stress over petty and unimportant things. They will dedicate most of their efforts to worldly gain, which will not benefit them in either this world or the next. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

“Say, “Shall we inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””

In respect to those who strive to study and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They will be granted a special perception in which to look at the world and their existence in it. This perception will allow them to see the purpose of their creation and their purpose on this Earth. Namely, to prepare for their meeting with Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This perception will make them understand that this world and the blessings in it are only a means to which they can reach the hereafter safely. Meaning, the world and the things in it are not an end in itself. This will encourage them to use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the

Exalted, as they understand that peace and success in both worlds lies only in this. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

“Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely bless them with a good life...”

They will prioritize everything and everyone within their life correctly according to Islamic teachings. They will give value to what is valuable and disregard what should be disregarded. Their example is of a librarian who organizes their great library of books in the correct order so that they can easily find the book they desire without any stress. Whereas, the one who does not prioritize things and people in their life correctly, according to the teachings of Islam, is like the librarian who arranges their large collection of books in a random order. As a result finding a single book becomes a nightmare and source of stress for them, as they misplaced all their books. Similarly, the one who misplaces the worldly blessings, such as wealth and people, they have been granted will find nothing but stress from them. This is the one who does not understand the purpose of their creation and their purpose on this Earth. This is the one who does not perceive the hereafter, even if they fulfil the basic obligatory duties.

As mentioned earlier, the perception the Holy Quran grants a person will make them understand that all the worldly blessings they have been granted are a means to an end and not an end in itself. Therefore, they will never be adversely affected by what they gain, lose or fail to obtain in this world, as all things are only a means. The means are not important, only the end is. Unlike those who fail to adopt the correct perception, through

understanding and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will not be bothered with the things they do not obtain in this world as they understand that anything they do not obtain in this world will be granted to them in the hereafter in a perfect and permanent way. This perception will allow them to observe the world as if it is a drop compared to the endless ocean of the hereafter, just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108. Therefore, they will not care if they lose the drop as they are literally standing at the shore of an ocean, meaning, the hereafter. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 77:

“...Say, "The enjoyment of this world is little, and the Hereafter is better for he who fears Allāh...””

This does not mean that this type of person abandons the world. Rather, they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, thereby obtaining peace and success in both worlds.

In reality, it is this perception, which is rooted in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge, that made the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the best of all creation, as they understood why Allah, the Exalted, created them and worked hard to fulfil it. The great Companion Abdullah Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, confirmed that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were the best because they were more detached from the material world

than anyone else and they desired the hereafter more than anyone else. This has been discussed in Imam Abu Na'im Al-Asfahani's, Hilyat Ul Awliya Wa Tabaqat Al Asfiya, Narration 278. This attitude was due to the perception they were granted.

Through this perception and understanding their lives became complete, purposeful and meaningful. Through their perception their aspirations touched the highest Heavens and as a result they became great as they understood and strived to fulfil the purpose of their creation. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 162:

"Say, "Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allāh, Lord of the worlds.""

Whereas, those whose vision was restricted to this lowly world became lowly, even if they obtained it all. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 24:

"The example of [this] worldly life is but like rain which We have sent down from the sky that the plants of the earth absorb - [those] from which men and livestock eat - until, when the earth has taken on its adornment and is beautified and its people suppose that they have capability over it, there comes to it Our command by night or by day, and We make it as a harvest, as if it had not flourished yesterday. Thus do We explain in detail the signs for a people who give thought."

It is this perception and understanding the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, grants the one who sincerely strives to understand and act on them. The one who misses out on this has failed to understand the purpose of their creation and the purpose of being on this Earth, even if they obtain Paradise in the Hereafter.

The three types of people discussed above has been summarized in the Holy Quran as well. Chapter 56 Al Waqi'ah, verses 1-11:

“When the Occurrence occurs...And you become [of] three kinds. Then the companions of the right - what are the companions of the right? And the companions of the left - what are companions of the left? And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh].”

Finally, one should always bear in mind that the teachings of the Holy Quran are summarized in chapter 1 Fatihah. And the summary of chapter 1 Al Fatihah is that each person has been given blessings by Allah, the Exalted. The one who uses these blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will obtain peace and success in both worlds. Whereas, the one who misuses them will obtain divine anger and ultimately lose in both worlds. When one adopts the correct perception through the Islamic teachings this lesson becomes clear. Chapter 1 Al Fatihah, verses 6-7:

“Guide us to the straight path. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have earned [Your] anger or of those who are astray.”

So strive to catchup to the forerunners through adopting this perception and understanding by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for time in this world is limited and the call to depart is at hand. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 45:

“And on the Day when He will gather them, [it will be] as if they had not remained [in the world] but an hour of the day...”

And chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 185:

“Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained [his desire]. And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion.”

The Material World - 1

It is important to note, the material world which one should detach from actually refers to one's desires. It does not refer to the physical world, such as the mountains. This is indicated by chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 14:

“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return [i.e., Paradise].”

These things are connected to the desires of people and by them one becomes distracted from preparing for the hereafter. When one abstains from their desires they are in fact detaching from the material world. This is why a muslim who does not possess worldly things can still be regarded a worldly person because of their inner desire and love for it. Whereas, a muslim who possesses worldly things, like some of the righteous predecessors, can be considered detached from the material world as they do not desire and occupy their minds, hearts and actions with them. Instead they desire lies in the eternal hereafter.

The first level of abstinence is turning away from unlawful and vain desires which are not connected to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This person busies themselves in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities all the while

focusing on the hereafter. They turn away from things and people who prevent them from fulfilling this important deed.

The next stage of abstinence is when one takes only the things they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities. They do not occupy their time on things which will not derive them benefit in the next world. This is the advice given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. He advised a muslim to live in this material world as a stranger or a traveller. Both types of people will only take what they need from the material world in order to reach their destination meaning, the hereafter safely. A muslim can achieve this by understanding how close their death and departure to the hereafter is. Not only can death pounce on a person at any time but even if one lives a long life it seems as though it passed in a moment. By realising this reality one sacrifices the moment for the sake of the eternal hereafter. Shortening one's hope for a long life in this material world will encourage them to perform righteous deeds, sincerely repent from their sins and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over all else. The one who hopes for a long life will be inspired to behave in the opposite manner.

The one who is truly abstinent in the material world neither blames it nor praises it. They do not rejoice when they gain it nor do they grieve when it passes them by. The mind of this pious muslim is too focused on the eternal hereafter to greedily notice the small material world.

Abstinence consists of several different levels. Some muslims abstain in order to free their hearts of every vain and useless occupation so that they can fully concentrate on obeying Allah, the Exalted, and fulfil their responsibilities towards people. According to the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 257, the one who behaves in such a manner will find that Allah, the Exalted, will suffice them by taking care of their worldly issues. But the one who is only concerned with worldly things will be left to their devices and will find nothing but destruction. This is why it is been said that the one who pursues the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, will find that the minimal effect it has on them is that it distracts them from the remembrance and obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is still true even if a person commits no sins in their pursuit of the excess aspects of the material world.

Some abstain from the world in order to lighten their accountability on the Day of Judgement. The more one possesses the more they will be held accountable. In fact, whoever has their deeds scrutinised by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day will be punished. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6536. The lighter one's accountability the less likely this will occur. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6444, that those who possess plenty in the world will possess very little good on the Day of Rising except for those who dedicated their belongings and wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, but these are a few in number. This long accountability is the reason why each person, rich or poor, will wish on the Day of Judgement that they were only given their daily provision during their lives on Earth. This has been confirmed in Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4140.

Some muslims abstain from the excess of this material world out of desire for Paradise which will make up for losing out on the pleasures of this material world.

Some abstain from the excess of the material world out of fear of Hell. They rightfully believe that the more one indulges in the excess of this material world the closer they are to the unlawful, which leads to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. In fact, it is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4215, that a muslim will not become pious until they abstain from something which is not a sin out of fear it may lead to a sin.

The highest degree of abstinence is to understand and act on what Allah, the Exalted, desires from His servants which has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Namely, to abstain from the excess of the material world out of servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, knowing that their Lord does not like the material world. Allah, the Exalted, has condemned the excess of this material world and has belittled its worth. These pious servants were embarrassed that their Lord should see them inclining towards something which He dislikes. These are the greatest servants as they only act according to the wishes of their Lord even when they are given an opportunity to enjoy the lawful luxuries of this world. This is the very reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose poverty even though he was offered the treasuries of the Earth. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6590. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose this as he knew it was what Allah, the Exalted, desired for His

servants. As Allah, the Exalted, disliked the material world the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, rejected it out of love for His Lord. How can a true servant love and indulge in what their Lord dislikes?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did set an example for the poor by choosing poverty and taught the rich how to live through his words and actions. He could have easily chosen the alternative and practically showed the rich how to live by taking the treasures of the world which were offered to him and he could have taught the poor how to live correctly through his words and actions. But he chose poverty for a specific reason which was out of servanthood to his Lord, Allah, the Exalted. This abstinence was adopted by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. For example, the first rightly guided Caliph of Islam Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, once cried when water sweetened with honey was given to him. He explained that he once observed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, pushing away an invisible object. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, told him the material world had come to him and he commanded it to leave him alone. The material world replied that he had escaped the material world but those after him would not. Because of this Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, wept when seeing the water sweetened with honey believing the material world had come to misguide him. This incident is recorded in Imam Ashfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 47.

In reality, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, never ate or dressed to gain pleasure but only took what they needed from the material world while focusing on preparing for the hereafter. They disliked when the

material world was placed at their feet being fearful that perhaps their reward had been given to them in this world instead of in the hereafter.

Anyone who is truly abstinent will follow in their footsteps. Muslims should not fool themselves by indulging in the unnecessary luxuries of this material world while claiming their heart is attached to Allah, the Exalted. If a person's heart is purified it manifests on their limbs and in their actions which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094. Whoever's heart is attached to Allah, the Exalted, follows in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by taking what they need from the material world, spending only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and turning away from the excess of the material world while striving to prepare for the hereafter. This is true abstinence.

The Material World - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to live in this world as a stranger or a traveller. And Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to advise that when a person reaches the evening they should not expect to be alive in the morning. And if they reach the morning they should not expect to be alive in the evening. And that a muslim must make use of their good health before they encounter sickness and make good use of their life before their death.

This Hadith teaches muslims to limit their hopes for a long life. Hopes for a long life is the main cause of failing to prepare for the hereafter as it encourages one to dedicate their complete effort to the material world, as they are convinced they have plenty of time to prepare for the hereafter.

A muslim should not treat this temporary world as their permanent home. Instead, they should behave as someone who is about to depart it, never to return. This would inspire one to dedicate the majority of their efforts in preparing for their final destination namely, the hereafter, and to limit their efforts in obtaining the material world which is beyond their need and responsibilities. This concept has been discussed throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for example chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 39:

“...this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter - that is the home of [permanent] settlement.”

In a similar Hadith to the main one under discussion, which is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described himself in this world as a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then swiftly moves on. In order to indicate the temporal nature of this world the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, compared it to shade which, as everyone knows, does not last long even though it appears to be permanent. This is how the material world can appear to some. They behave as if the world will last forever whereas in reality it will quickly fade away.

In addition, this Hadith mentions a rider and not someone who is walking. This is because a rider would rest significantly less than someone journeying on foot. This further indicates that a person's stay in this world is very short. This is quite evident to all. Even those who reach elderly age admit their life went by in a flash. So in reality, whether one reaches old age or not, life is just a moment. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 45:

“And on the Day when He will gather them, [it will be] as if they had not remained [in the world] but an hour of the day...”

In reality, the material world is like a bridge which must be crossed and not taken as a permanent home. The same way a person does not take a bus station as their home knowing their stay there will only be for a short while similarly, the world is a short stop before one reaches the eternal hereafter.

When someone goes on a once in a lifetime holiday, in most cases, they will limit their spending on luxury household items, such as a wide screen television, and instead make do with whatever services their hotel offers. They behave in this manner as they understand that their stay in the hotel will be short and soon they will leave, never to return. This mentality prevents them from taking the holiday destination as their permanent home. Similarly, people were sent to Earth for a purpose which is definitely not to make it their permanent home. Instead, they were sent to take provisions from it so that they can safely reach their permanent home meaning, the hereafter. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him.

Whenever a person intends to travel they first acquire the provision they need in order to make the journey comfortable and successful. As indicated in the Holy Quran the best provision for the hereafter is piety. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

“...indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah...”

This is when a muslim fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, believing He only chooses what is best for His servants. Other provisions, such as food, are required in order to complete the journey from the world to the hereafter. But the provision which should be prioritised is piety as it is the only provision which will benefit someone in both this world and the next. It leads to peace in this world and in the next. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

As the material world is not the permanent home of a person they should therefore act on the main Hadith under discussion and either live as if they were a stranger or a traveller.

The first state of being a stranger is someone who does not attach their heart and mind to their temporary home. Their only aim is to gather enough supplies so that they can return safely to their permanent home namely, the hereafter. This is like the one who lives in a foreign country on a work visa. Their place of work is not their home; only a place to earn money so that they can return back to their homeland with it. This person will never treat the strange country as their home. Instead, they will only spend on necessary things and concentrate on saving their wealth so that they can

take as much wealth as possible back to their real and permanent home. If this person spent all or the majority of their wealth in the foreign country and returned to their home country empty handed they would undoubtedly be considered blameworthy by their relatives. This is because they have failed in their mission and purpose of living in another country on a work visa. Similarly, a muslim should dedicate the majority of their efforts in acquiring provisions to take to the hereafter. They should not compete for the luxuries of the material world with others. Instead, they must concentrate on their mission to acquire provisions for the eternal hereafter. If they dedicate too much effort in beautifying their temporary home then they will enter the hereafter unprepared and empty handed and therefore, fail in their mission which Allah, the Exalted, entrusted them with. A muslim should be honest with themselves and reflect on how many hours of the day they dedicate to the material world and preparing for the hereafter. This self-reflection will show them if they have the correct mentality or not and how strong their faith in the hereafter really is. Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

“But you prefer the worldly life. While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was sent to mankind when they were the most lowly of people and the vast majority of them were leading a sinful life which would have caused them to enter Hell. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, called them towards the path of truth with clear proofs. Many of these people accepted his clear message and followed him. He promised them that Islam would conquer many nations and much wealth would be obtained by the muslims. But he warned them not to become distracted by

the luxuries of the material world. An example of this warning is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that competing for the unnecessary luxuries of the material world would destroy people. Therefore, he advised muslims to content themselves with the basic necessities in order to fulfil their responsibilities and needs and instead concentrate on preparing for the hereafter. Everything the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, promised muslims came true. When the world was opened to the muslims the majority of them became busy with competing, collecting, hoarding and enjoying the excess of the material world. Thus, they gave up preparing for the hereafter correctly as they were told to by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only a few accepted his advice and only took what they needed from the material world in order to fulfil their needs and responsibilities and dedicated the majority of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter. This small party, meaning the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors, caught up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in the hereafter, as they practically followed his advice and footsteps. On the other hand, the majority continued in their heedlessness chasing the material world until death caught them unprepared.

The second mentality muslims should adopt as advised in the main Hadith under discussion is that of a traveller. This person does not observe this material world as their home and instead journeys towards their true home meaning, the hereafter. This mentality is similar to a back packer who may sleep over in different cities but never regards them as their home. The only provision they take with them is what they can carry meaning, the essentials. This includes the things they need to survive and will help them reach their destination safely. A back packer would never pack unnecessary items knowing that these things will only be a burden for them. Nor will they fail to pack the essentials needed to complete their

journey safely. Similarly, an intelligent muslim only collects the deeds from this material world, in respect to actions and speech, which will help them reach the hereafter safely. They will turn away from all actions and speech which will become a burden for them in both this world and the next. This is the attitude the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to adopt in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4104. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 7-8:

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

A muslim must understand that the day and night are only brief stages in which people travel through, stage by stage, until they reach the hereafter. Therefore, they should use each stage by sending ahead provision to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds. They must constantly be aware that their journey will end very soon and they will reach the hereafter. Even if the journey looks long it will ultimately feel like a moment so one should make it a moment of obedience before it ends while they are unprepared. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 45:

“And on the Day when He will gather them, [it will be] as if they had not remained [in the world] but an hour of the day...”

With every breath one takes, they are moving towards the hereafter while leaving the world behind. Even though, one may seem not to be moving but in reality, the day and night act as their conveyance which takes them swiftly, without pause, to the next world.

Muslims must realise that as they are the servants of Allah, the Exalted, soon a day will come when they will return to Him. When they return they will be stopped for questioning. Therefore, they should prepare something good for this interrogation. They should prepare by using the blessings they were granted in this world in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. But if they continue in heedlessness and fail to prepare, then they will be taken to task for what has already occurred and for what remains.

Moving on to the advice of the Companion, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. The first part of it highlights the importance of shortening one's hope for a long life in this world. A muslim should not believe their stay in this world is long, as they could pass away at any moment. Even if one lives for many years, life still seems to have gone by in a flash. This is what Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, indicated by advising muslims not to believe they will be alive in the morning if they reach the evening. This mentality is the root cause of only taking what one needs from the material world in order to fulfil their worldly responsibilities and prepare for the hereafter. Whereas, having hopes for a long life is the root cause of the opposite meaning, it causes one to delay preparing for the hereafter by performing righteous deeds and refraining from sins and it encourages them to collect and hoard the material world, believing their stay in it will be extremely long.

In addition, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised muslims to make good use of their good health before they encounter sickness. Unfortunately, most people only appreciate the value of good health after they lose it, which has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412. Making use of good health means that a muslim should use their physical and mental strength in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by performing righteous deeds and refraining from sins before they reach a time when they might desire to perform good deeds but can no longer do them due to poor health. The one who makes good use of their good health will be given the reward of the righteous deeds they performed during their good health, even when they encounter sickness and can no longer do them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2996. Whereas, the one who does not make good use of their good health will lose this potential reward when they become sick. In fact, they will be left with nothing except regret.

The final part of the advice given by Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, is that a person should make good use of their life before death. This includes making use of all things which lead to righteous deeds, such as wealth, and avoiding all those things which prevent one from doing good deeds, such as unnecessary preoccupations. It is important for muslims to make good use of their time before they become distracted with responsibilities which naturally occur with the passing of time, such as marriage. And to make good use of their wealth before their financial responsibilities increase. Making good use of time is essential for success as it is a strange worldly blessing, which never returns after it departs, unlike all other blessings. One must make use of their time by prioritising their activities correctly according to the teachings of Islam. The one who behaves in this manner will fulfill all their responsibilities, duties and

necessities and have plenty of time to enjoy lawful pleasures in a balanced way.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2403, all people will have regrets at the time of their death. The good doer will regret that they did not perform more good deeds before dying. The sinful person will regret that they did not sincerely repent before their death. In this world people are often given second chances for example, redoing a driving test, but there is no do over once a person dies. Regret will not help them at all. Instead, it will only add to their pain and suffering. So muslims must use the time they are given to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, before their moment ends by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. One should abandon the mentality of delaying things till tomorrow, as in most cases this tomorrow never comes. A muslim should concentrate on today and therefore, do the things which please Allah, the Exalted, as tomorrow may come in this world but they may not be alive to witness it.

The Material World - 3

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2142, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim should be moderate when seeking worldly things as what is destined for them will surely reach them.

It is important to understand that Islam does not encourage muslims to completely abandon the material world, as it is a bridge which connects one to the hereafter. How can one possibly reach the hereafter without crossing this bridge? Islam instead teaches muslims to take from this world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents while avoiding excess, waste and extravagance and then dedicate their efforts in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important to remember that the things one will obtain in this world, such as their provision, have already been apportioned to them over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748.

As a person's provision is guaranteed and cannot increase or decrease, irrespective of their efforts, they should strive for it according to their necessities and responsibilities, as striving for more will only lead to stress and they may not obtain what their desire. In addition, this excess striving will distract them from practically preparing for the hereafter. This in turn will only lead to further stress for them in both worlds. Whereas, obeying the main Hadith and striving moderately for one's provision, will ensure they receive their apportioned share with minimal stress, they fulfil their responsibilities and prepare adequately for the hereafter. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

The Material World - 4

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2380, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of a balanced diet. He advised that one should split their stomach into three parts. The first part is for food, the second part is for drink and the last part should be left empty for breathing.

This diet plan can be achieved when one stops eating before they reach their fill. This was the behaviour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

If people were to act on this advice they would be safe from both physical and mental illnesses. In fact, according to many knowledgeable people one of the main causes of illness is indigestion.

In respect to the spiritual heart, little food leads to a soft heart, humility of self and weakness of desires and anger. A full stomach results in laziness which prevents worship and other righteous deeds. It induces sleep which causes one to miss out on the voluntary and even the obligatory night prayers. It prevents reflection which is the key to assessing one's deeds and therefore changing one's character for the better. The one with a full stomach forgets the poor and is therefore less likely to help them. All these negative effects lead to a hard spiritual

heart. The one who possesses a hard spiritual heart will not be safe on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”

The one who is only concerned about their stomach becomes distracted from more important things, such as learning and acting on religious knowledge. They become so preoccupied with gaining, preparing and eating different types of foods that it consumes a large portion of their time, energy and money. This attitude also prevents one from eating simple foods, which are easier and less time consuming to prepare and cheaper to buy. Extravagance in food also encourages one to become extravagant in other things, such as one's clothes and housing. This attitude in turn encourages one to earn more wealth in order to satisfy their extravagant lifestyle. This distracts them further from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they can achieve peace and success in both worlds. It can also encourage them towards the unlawful in order to satisfy their extravagant lifestyle.

Muslims should know that the most fed in this world will be the hungriest on the Day of Judgment. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2478.

Therefore, muslims should strive to obtain a balanced diet so that they avoid the negative effects discussed which will undoubtedly hinder their success in both this world and the next.

The Material World - 5

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises preparing for the hereafter over striving for this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world, will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person, even if they possess little wealth, as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter, the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this, but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will

cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

Prioritising preparing for the hereafter means that one should always act and speak in a way which will benefit them in the hereafter. As explained earlier, this includes striving for one's lawful provision in order to fulfill their necessities and responsibilities without being wasteful or extravagant. Any activity which will not benefit one in the hereafter should be minimized. The more one behaves in this manner the more contentment they will be blessed with and the easier their day to day activities will become. In addition, they will adequately prepare for the hereafter also, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they achieve peace and success in both worlds.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises striving after the material world over preparing for the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world, will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied. This, by definition, makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful, which only leads to a greater loss in both worlds. Finally, because of their attitude, they will not prepare adequately for the hereafter. Therefore, this person obtains stress and discontentment in both worlds.

The Material World - 6

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the muslim nation. Instead, he feared that the worldly blessings would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to compete for it and in turn, this would lead to their destruction, as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things beyond their needs, even if they are lawful, it will distract them from practically preparing for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. It will lead them to bad character, such as being wasteful and extravagant, and may even take them towards sins, in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. Competing for worldly blessings with others, will lead them to adopting other negative characteristics, such as envy, spite and enmity, which leads to disunity, insincerity and failing to fulfil the rights of others. This competition may even cause one to harm others. This only leads to destruction in both worlds, even if this is not obvious to a person in this world.

It is obvious these worldly desires have taken control over many muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain worldly blessings, such as wealth, or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this, then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter, as it may cause them to violate the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. The more one pursues their worldly desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter, as a person can either use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, or according to their own desires. This will lead to the destruction warned in the main Hadith under discussion. A destruction which begins with stress and anxiety in this world and leads to extreme difficulties in the hereafter. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

The Material World - 7

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider, who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then leaves it behind by moving on.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls, and to where they are heading, which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been compared to a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away quickly without people even taking notice, which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is, they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgment Day), as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider not someone walking, as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of the tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need, just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will result in them obtaining peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

As mentioned in the main Hadith, just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not concerned about the unnecessary aspects of this world, a Muslim must also adopt this attitude, as the more one dedicates their energy and time to gaining and enjoying the unnecessary things of this world, the less time and energy they will have to use their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This

distraction will lead to nothing but stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

One should note that this discussion does not mean one should abandon this world, as this Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter instead of dedicating their efforts and time to unnecessary things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

"And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.""

The Material World - 8

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4102, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to obtain the love of Allah, the Exalted.

The love of Allah, the Exalted, is obtained when one avoids the excess of this material world, which are beyond their needs and responsibilities. Meaning, a muslim should strive in this world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. And they should strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anything from the material world which aids one in these things is not in reality a worldly thing. Therefore, avoiding them is not required. But one must avoid those things which either hinder or prevent them from fulfilling these duties. When one persists on this attitude they will only use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

This is how a muslim can keep the world in their hand and not in their heart. This is how a muslim obtains the love of Allah, the Exalted, as this attitude causes them to strive in His obedience, which attracts the love of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

The Material World - 9

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2346, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever wakes up in the morning safe from danger, healthy and having food for the day, is as if the world was gathered for them.

In this day and age, where many people around the world are living in unsafe countries, a muslim who has been blessed with safety should make use of it by using their freedom to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, they should take advantage of journeying to the Mosques for the congregational prayers and religious gatherings of knowledge.

In addition, muslims should extend this sense of security to others, irrespective of their faith, so that the whole society becomes secure from danger. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, a person cannot be a true muslim or believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from a person and their possessions. Simply put, a muslim should treat others in the same way they desire to be treated by people.

A muslim must take advantage of their good health by obeying Allah, the Exalted, as it is a blessing which is often only truly appreciated until it is lost. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412. Those who make good use of their good health by obeying Allah, the Exalted, will find that they will receive His support when they eventually lose their good health. For example, the one who falls sick will receive the reward for doing the same righteous deeds they used to do when they were healthy, even if they no longer do them because of their sickness. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who fail to make use of their good health are unlikely to receive this support. It is important to note, making use of one's health includes striving in this material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents, while avoiding extravagance and waste.

One of the major concerns of a person is their provision. A muslim should remember that it was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. The one who obtains their daily provision should concern themselves with their other duties and plan for tomorrow without stressing, as their provision is guaranteed.

Finally, the main Hadith also encourages one to adopt a simple lifestyle, as this leads to peace of mind and body. The more one strives for the unnecessary aspects of the material world, the more they will stress. For example, the one who owns one house will have less stress and things to deal with than the one who owns two houses. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that simplicity is a part of faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118.

The Material World - 10

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents, as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and pursue lawful yet unnecessary worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. This behaviour prevents them from obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This prevents them from using the worldly blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not, they angrily turn away from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess, as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor, even if they possess much wealth. Whereas, the satisfied person is not greedy, meaning needy, and this makes them rich, even if they possess little of this world. A muslim should know that Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according to their desires, as this, in most cases, would lead to their destruction. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down

in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”

The Material World - 11

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6439, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that if a person possessed a valley of gold, they would desire another and nothing fills their stomach except dust. But Allah, the Exalted, forgives those who repent to Him.

This Hadith warns against possessing too many worldly desires. The problem with them, even if they are lawful, is that fulfilling one desire only leads to more. One door leads to ten others. And this never ends unless one repents from this behaviour or when they die and the dust of their grave finally fills their stomach. Lawful worldly desires can also lead to unlawful desires, as many people who ended up in the unlawful began by indulging in lawful desires. The more desires a person has, the more needy they become, which is another name for being poor. This poverty never ends, irrespective of how much one obtains or how many desires they fulfill. It is why it has been said that the essential needs of a pauper gets fulfilled, as this is guaranteed by Allah, the Exalted, but the desires of kings are left unfulfilled. A muslim should instead strive in this world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance. And they should minimize their worldly desires in order to avoid this real poverty and instead seek peace and comfort with the Controller of hearts and emotions, namely, Allah, the Exalted, through His sincere obedience, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

It does not take a scholar to conclude that those who are obsessed with fulfilling their lawful or unlawful desires, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, never find peace, irrespective of how many worldly possessions they own. In fact, those who behave in this manner are the furthest from peace of mind and are the closest to anxiety, stress and depression and are the most addicted to drugs and alcohol. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

The Material World - 12

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this simile was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared, as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups, it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world, as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to prioritize striving for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach, over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

An intelligent person will not prioritize a drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

The Material World - 13

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance. The more one concentrates on a simple life, the easier it becomes to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

In addition, a muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead, the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is, the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter, as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment. The more strict one's accounting, the more they will be punished. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 103.

The Material World - 14

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6501, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the worldly things which are raised up in social status will eventually be lowered by Allah, the Exalted.

This does not mean that muslims should avoid the material world and trying to achieve success in it. Muslims should strive to obtain a worldly education and a lawful occupation as it helps one to avoid unlawful wealth and is required to fulfil one's responsibilities, such as fulfilling their needs and the needs of their dependents. An example describing this duty is recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

The main Hadith means that one should not make worldly success their number one priority and instead dedicate most of their efforts to preparing for the hereafter. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. No matter how much worldly success one gains, eventually it will fade away. This fading will occur either when one is alive or their success will part from them when they pass away. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379. Countless people have built empires and achieved worldly success yet all of them faded away. How many people have had their names plastered across sky scrapers yet, after a short while their names were removed and they were forgotten?

This Hadith does not mean that a person will not be given success after facing trouble. Muslims should strive to achieve success in the world and not give up when they face setbacks. The key is to prioritize the success of the hereafter over the world by using the blessings and success of the material world to achieve success in the hereafter. One can achieve this by striving for lawful worldly success; fulfil their responsibilities and duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people while avoiding waste and extravagance. And they should utilise their worldly success to aid them in the hereafter, such as donating their excess wealth. If their worldly success is fame or political, then they should use their influence to benefit others, as this will help them in the hereafter. This is how one uses their worldly success to benefit their hereafter.

It is important to note, that the one who only aims to benefit themselves in this world will not gain benefit in the hereafter. But the one who aims to benefit themselves in the hereafter, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will gain benefit in both worlds in the form of peace and success. This is the only way one can ensure they continue to benefit from their worldly success before and after it inevitably fades away. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The Material World - 15

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2347, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that his true friend is the one who possesses the following characteristics.

The first characteristic is that they strive and obtain only what they require in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents while avoiding excessiveness, waste and extravagance. One can adopt this attitude when they strive to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith is that they avoid obtaining any type of fame or social honor. According to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, this desire is more destructive to a muslim's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause to a herd of sheep. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than their craving for wealth. A person will even spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise preparing for the hereafter over

enjoying the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but the one who receives it without asking for it will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment.

This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, warns that this person will go to Hell.

Seeking repute also causes one to act in order to please people instead of acting to please Allah, the Exalted. This person will be told to gain the reward for their deeds on Judgment Day from the people they acted for, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Seeking repute also causes one to adopt negative characteristics, such as being two-faced, in order to please everyone. This leads to many sins and

this person will ultimately be disgraced publicly by Allah, the Exalted. The very people which they aimed to please will criticize and hate them, even if they conceal this from them.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that their death comes quickly, their mourners are few and the inheritance they leave behind is small.

Their death comes suddenly so that they are taken to the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, quickly and in order to protect them from the difficulties of a slow and prolonged death.

Their mourners are few, as they avoided seeking social honor and preferred to remain anonymous, as they feared showing off their righteous deeds to others. But the few mourners they do have are far better than the many the rich and famous have. Their few mourners are sincere in their sadness and genuinely supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, for their forgiveness whereas the many mourners of the rich and famous do not behave in this manner.

The inheritance they leave behind is small, as they directed the vast majority of their blessings towards the hereafter, by using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They understood that anything they left behind would fall into the hands of others who would enjoy the blessings

while they, the deceased, will be held accountable for obtaining it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, warns that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds accompany them in their lonely grave. Therefore, they concentrate on obtaining righteous deeds by using their blessings correctly and avoid misusing them thereby committing sins. Even though, they leave little behind as inheritance they in fact take a lot with them to the hereafter in order to support themselves in their moment of need. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 18:

“O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow...”

Finally, they may not leave much worldly things behind, such as wealth and properties, but they do leave behind a huge legacy of goodness, such as ongoing charity and useful knowledge, which continues to benefit them even after their death. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376.

To conclude, those who claim to love the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, must support this verbal claim with actions. Claims without actions have little value in both worldly and religious matters. One of these proofs is to adopt these characteristics which lead to his friendship. The one who befriends the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will be granted his company in the hereafter. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 69:

"And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allāh has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions."

The Material World - 16

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6514, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that two things abandon a deceased at their grave and only one thing remains with them. The two things which abandon them are their family and wealth and the only thing which remains with them are their deeds.

Throughout history people have always concentrated the majority of their efforts to obtaining wealth and a happy family. Even though Islam does not prohibit these things, as they may be required to fulfill one's responsibilities and duties. Islam only discourages Muslims from striving for these things beyond their needs and in cases when these things prevent one from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

One must strive to obtain the needed wealth to fulfill their responsibilities, according to the teachings of Islam, and obtain a family which will encourage them to prepare for the hereafter. These are both considered good deeds when utilized in such a manner. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6373. This is the sign of an intelligent person who gives priority to the thing which will endure and support them in their moment of need namely, righteous deeds. On the other hand, the one who allows their wealth and relatives to prevent them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted,

are described as losers in the Holy Quran. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verse 9:

“O you who have believed, let not your wealth and your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that - then those are the losers.”

Some may incorrectly believe they are close to Allah, the Exalted, as He has bestowed them with great wealth and family. But Allah, the Exalted, clears their confusion by declaring that the one who is dearer and nearer to Him are those who believe and perform righteous deeds. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 37:

“And it is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us in position, but it is [by being] one who has believed and done righteousness...”

In another place of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, warns mankind that their wealth and relatives will not benefit them in the hereafter unless they reach the hereafter with a sound heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

"The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."

The definition of the sound heart is lengthy, but simply put, one cannot obtain it until they sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they adopt positive characteristics and eliminate negative characteristics. The one who possesses good character will fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in this manner possesses a sound spiritual heart and body.

In addition, one's wealth can only benefit them in the hereafter if they send it ahead of them by spending it on ongoing charity projects. This is confirmed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. The same Hadith informs mankind that a righteous child praying for the forgiveness of their deceased parent will be accepted also. Unfortunately, in this day and age many children are too busy seeking their inheritance to supplicate for their deceased parents. It is important to understand that raising a righteous child who supplicates for their deceased parent is not possible to achieve if the parents do not perform righteous deeds themselves during their lives i.e. leading by example. Secondly, it is not the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, to abstain from performing righteous deeds and hope others will pray for them after they depart from this world. One should strive for righteous deeds while they are alive and then hope others will pray for them after they pass away.

It is important to understand that only the wealth one sends forward to hereafter will benefit them. This involves spending one's wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as spending on fulfilling one's responsibilities and duties, such as the education of their children. All wealth spent on vain or sinful things will become a source of stress for the owner and may well lead to their punishment in both worlds. Those who withhold the obligatory charity out of greed have been warned of dreadful punishments. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that a person who commits this grave sin on the Day of Judgement will encounter a huge poisonous snake which will wrap around them and bite them continuously. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection...”

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1658, warns that on the Day of Judgment the gold and silver a person owned will be heated up in the flames of Hell and their bodies will be branded with it, if they failed to donate the obligatory charity due on it.

Furthermore, any wealth left behind by the deceased will be left to others to enjoy, while the deceased is held accountable for collecting it. It is

important to note, if a person knowingly leaves wealth to someone who is not fit to possess it and thus misuses it, then the deceased may well be held accountable for this also. Conversely, if one leaves wealth behind to someone who spends it correctly then the deceased will face much regret on the Day of Judgment when they observe the great reward given to the one who spent it correctly.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7420, that a person can only use their wealth in three ways. The first is the wealth which is spent on their food. The second is the wealth spent on their clothes and the final wealth is what they spent in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. All other wealth is left behind for other people to enjoy while the deceased is held accountable for collecting it.

Hoarding and incorrectly spending wealth inspires one to love the material world and dislike the hereafter, as they dislike leaving their beloved wealth behind, which will occur when they die. The one who dislikes the hereafter will not adequately prepare for it. Meaning, they will not use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, if one desires to adopt true piety then they must be ready to spend their wealth for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love...”

In reality, wealth is a strange companion as it only benefits someone when it leaves them, meaning, when it is spent in the correct way.

A person would be labelled a fool if they went on a long trip without any provisions. Similarly, the one who does not send their wealth ahead in the form of provisions for their long journey to the hereafter is also foolish.

There is no doubt that one of the greatest pains a person feels at the time of death is when they realize that they are leaving behind their hard earned wealth and journeying towards the hereafter empty handed. A muslim should avoid this outcome at all costs.

Performing righteous deeds is the only way one prepares for their grave, as no other things of comfort will be found there. It is in fact the means for preparing one's eternal home in the hereafter. Therefore, this preparation should take priority over preparing for the temporal material world.

A person would be labelled a fool if they had two homes and dedicated the majority of their efforts on beautifying the home which they will spend less

time in. Similarly, if a muslim dedicates more time and effort in beautifying their temporal home in this world over the eternal home of the hereafter, they too are simply foolish. This is the attitude of some, even though they admit and believe their stay in this world is short and for an unknown length whereas, their stay in the hereafter will be eternal.

This attitude indicates a lack of certainty of faith and it is therefore vital for anyone who shares this mentality to seek and act on Islamic knowledge in order to strengthen their certainty of faith before they reach the hereafter bereft of all good.

The one who prepares for their grave with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will find that their good deeds provide comfort for them whereas, the sins their accumulated will only make their stay in the dark grave worse. A muslim should therefore perform good deeds during their strength and ability before their time of weakness arrives. Each muslim should recognise the reality indicated in the main Hadith and therefore use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, before they reach a time when their request to be given more time to perform righteous deeds will be denied. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come...”

They should reflect now on their deeds so that they can sincerely repent from sins and strive harder to perform righteous deeds before a day arrives when reflecting will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”

Let each one ponder over those who passed away before them and their inability to perform more righteous deeds to comfort them in their moment of need. Make haste before this time arrives and prepare for the inevitable. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 99:

“And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty [i.e., death].”

The Material World - 17

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of a wise person, as a muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties and responsibilities as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring more wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart

this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy, even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth. As striving for more wealth involves opening more worldly doors and preoccupations, the more they strive to increase their wealth, the less peace of mind and body they will obtain. And the more they will misuse the blessings they have been granted in their pursuit of their fortune. Only the one who forgets Allah, the Exalted, misuses the blessings they have been granted by Him. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the

wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains. Just like the main Hadith under discussion warns, this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss.

A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and social status.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it, they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not

appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it, even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worst type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The Material World - 18

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Some Muslims often claim that one's faith and the material world need to walk hand in hand with each other without a person being extreme in either. It is strange how most of those who claim this and use this statement as a way to enjoy the lawful luxuries and pleasures of this world do not truly understand nor adhere to it. This statement is true but applies to those worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, occasionally exercising in order to keep the body healthy which is a trust given to a person. It does not mean one can enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world in excess while neglecting following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge even if they fulfil the standard obligatory duties. As gaining knowledge in itself is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

In addition, walking hand in hand would suggest that one dedicates equal attention, effort and time to each thing. How many Muslims can honestly say that they dedicate equal effort, energy and time to the material world and preparing for the hereafter? If they do not, and most do not, then how exactly are they fulfilling this statement?

A Muslim should not fool themselves as their time on Earth is limited and they will not be given a second chance once they depart from it. Therefore, they should honestly strive to fulfil this statement by at least dedicating equal

time, effort and energy to both the material world and preparing for the hereafter. It is important to note, that some would argue that treating a temporary abode and an everlasting abode equal is not wise.

The Material World - 19

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the importance of maintaining a balanced life whereby a Muslim fulfils their necessities and responsibilities in this world, prepares adequately for the hereafter and occasionally enjoys lawful pleasures. Even though, this is the best approach it is very difficult to fulfil just like walking a tight rope whereby a person can easily fall into either of the two extremes. One side is when one is too focused on the material world which prevents them from striving in preparing for the hereafter correctly. The other side is where one strives hard in preparing for the hereafter but struggles and even fails to fulfil their worldly duties. But it is important to note, that even though a perfect balance is best it is far better to incline towards the hereafter than this material world. As the one who favours the hereafter might find this world difficult but they are more likely to achieve eternal success in the hereafter. On the other hand, the one who inclines to the world more may find success therein but they are more likely to fail in the hereafter. In other words, inclining towards the hereafter is the safer option compared to inclining towards the material world. So if a Muslim struggles to find the perfect balance, which the vast majority do, they should be kind to themselves and incline more towards the hereafter so that they can obtain eternal success instead of temporary worldly success. Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

“But you prefer the worldly life, While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”

The Material World - 20

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is part of normal behaviour to fear losing one's possessions. In fact, generally speaking the more one possesses the more they will fear losing them and the less they possess the less they will fear. This is just like the person who goes out in the middle of the night while possessing many valuable things, such as an expensive phone and tablet. This person will obviously have more fear of losing their possessions than the one who leaves their home in the middle of the night while carrying nothing valuable. Muslims should therefore understand the reality of this in respect to this temporal world and the eternal hereafter. The one who possesses much worldly things which will not benefit them in the hereafter, such as excess wealth they have hoarded will always fear leaving this world through death and the troubles of this world more than the one who possesses less worldly things. This fear removes the very aim of these possessions which is to achieve peace of mind and body. In fact, achieving peace of mind and body is the very reason people strive in this material world. But in order to remove this fear a Muslim does not need to become physically empty handed. They only need to detach from their possessions spiritually. This is achieved when one only takes from this material world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents and then dedicates the rest of their worldly blessings towards the hereafter by using them as prescribed by Islam. This will ensure that they truly own their possessions instead of their belongings possessing them. This will also remove the fear of losing their possessions as they have already sent them forward to the hereafter for safe keeping. This will allow them to achieve peace of mind and body in this world and in the next.

The Material World - 21

I had a thought which I wanted to share. According to an incident which has been recorded in Imam Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 510, the great Companion Abu Darda, may Allah be pleased with him, refused to give his daughter's hand in marriage to a rich and powerful person. He advised that he only did this as he feared his daughter would get lost in the excess and luxuries of this world which would undoubtedly damage her faith.

It is strange how the majority of Muslims have adopted the opposite mindset to this. And often seek rich and influential people in order to join ties with. They are often less concerned about the strength of their faith and therefore fail to connect with families for this reason which has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3635. Even though, a family should not marry in to a family which cannot financially support their relative but at the same time they should not set wealth and social status as their only benchmark for finding a suitable spouse for their relative.

This incident shows the importance of always seeking good for others by considering faith in all situations and circumstances. Meaning, one should only get into situations when they firmly believe their faith will either strengthen through it or at least not become damaged because of it. If they suspect this may occur they should avoid it at all costs as all worldly things come and go but the strength of one's faith is the thing that will define their

ultimate and permanent destination in the hereafter therefore, it should always be protected.

The Material World - 22

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, has only given one heart to each person. Therefore, two opposite things cannot be contained within it at the same time just like fire and ice cannot come together in one container. This is similar to how a traveller heading east will inevitably move further away from the west. Similarly, the hereafter and the material world are two opposites. They therefore cannot be contained at the same time in a single person's heart. The more one loves and practically strives for the excess of the material world the less they will love and practically strive for the hereafter. This is an unavoidable reality. A Muslim should not fool themselves into believing it is possible. The two can never come together in a single heart. One will always overcome the other. Even if one believes they can indulge in the lawful excess of this material world they should realise that first of all, this will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. Secondly, it will cause them to be that much closer to the unlawful as indulging in lawful things is usually the first step to the unlawful. The one who avoids this mentality will protect their faith and honour. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

“But you prefer the worldly life. While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”

The Material World - 23

I had a thought which I wanted to share. If a person had to cross a country and was presented different paths to choose from such as, a path through a dangerous jungle or over a mountain or through an underground cave an intelligent person would certainly choose the simplest and easiest path. This would allow them to reach their destination safely while achieving peace of mind and body. Only a fool would choose a difficult and dangerous path thereby, unnecessarily burdening themselves.

In reality, each person is on a journey through this world and their destination is the hereafter. Therefore, an intelligent Muslim should choose the path through this world which is easy and straight forward in order to reach the hereafter safely. This path consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and only taking from this material world in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This would allow them to reach the hereafter safely while obtaining peace of mind and body. But the more one indulges in the excess of this material world and unnecessarily devotes themselves to people and their desires the more difficult their journey will become. This attitude will only deprive them of peace of mind and body and reduce the chances of them reaching the hereafter safely.

To conclude, Muslims must understand that life is a journey so they should therefore be kind to themselves and choose the simple and easy path in order to reach the hereafter safely thereby obtaining peace of mind and body in both worlds.

The Material World - 24

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is obvious that envy has affected many Muslims. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned this would occur in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2510. It leads to many other negative characteristics and problems. For example, it prevents Muslims from fulfilling the important duty of supporting good irrespective of who does it as the jealous person does not desire to aid others as they believe the other person's rank in society will increase beyond their own.

A Muslim must take steps to remove jealousy from their character. One thing which can aid in this goal is to become content with what a person possesses. Allah, the Exalted, does not give people according to their desires as this might lead to their destruction. He instead gives what is best for each person's faith. Understanding this can eliminate jealousy over what others possess. How many Muslims obtained wealth which destroyed their faith? And how many Muslims will be forgiven on Judgment Day because of the tests they endured patiently? Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

The other thing to understand is that as this material world is limited it is easy to become jealous over the things within it. But if a Muslim aims for the hereafter and prioritises it over the excess of this material world it would remove jealousy from them. This is because the blessings of the hereafter are unlimited therefore, there is no need to be jealous as there are plenty of blessings to go around in fact, they will never end. But the more one aims and desires the limited things found within the world the more jealous they will become.

The Material World - 25

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the material world and the amount of effort most people dedicate to it compared to the effort dedicated to one's religion. If one observes the material world, such as the movie industry, they will find that the people involved dedicate a large amount of effort in order to achieve success. For example, not only do people spend countless hours and millions of pounds making a film but after its completion they dedicate more effort and money publicising it. Celebrities travel around the world for the sake of a meeting or interview which lasts less than hour just to promote their work.

Unfortunately, it is quite obvious that most Muslims do not even dedicate a fraction of this effort in their religious affairs, such as strengthening their own faith or spreading the word of Islam. Social media is full of worldly things which people have dedicated much time and money to which is obvious to anyone who observes it. Whereas, the money and effort dedicated to Islamic education on social media is only a fraction of this. Islam does not teach Muslims to completely abandon the world as it is required in order to gather one's lawful provision. But if a Muslim honestly assesses their own life and daily activities it will be obvious to them that the majority of their effort, wealth and time is dedicated to the material world. It is very rare to observe someone who dedicates the majority of their time to Islam and preparing for the hereafter. If people can dedicate so much effort and money on worldly things, such as making movies, even though these are temporal things Muslims should work even harder for the eternal hereafter. These worldly people dedicate much effort to their worldly projects and therefore obtain success. If Muslims desire real success in this world and in the next they too must dedicate time and energy in preparing

for the hereafter. It is simply foolish to believe that a Muslim can obtain the blessings of this world and the next by either exerting minimal effort or no effort at all in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. If worldly success cannot be achieved without effort how can a Muslim believe they will obtain religious success without effort? Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

“But you prefer the worldly life. While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”

The Material World - 26

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important to understand that even though people strive in this material world in order to achieve peace of mind it is not possible to achieve in this world as it has not been placed in the material world. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."

Even though this fact eludes many it is quite obvious that the more one strives in this material world the more doors they open to the material world. Fulfilling one worldly task leads to ten others. So a person moves from one preoccupation to another with the no end in sight until they depart this world. The only way to obtain some peace in this world is through the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This Muslim will be granted peace of mind by Allah, the Exalted. But even then it is important to understand that true lasting peace of mind is only found in the hereafter. This is because no matter how good someone's life is even if they reach a point where they have no worldly or religious responsibilities as they have discharged them all and they have no other things to deal with even then, the reality of death, the grave and Judgment Day will prevent them from obtaining true lasting peace. Therefore, a Muslim should understand this reality as it helps one to remain patient when dealing with life and what it brings and it encourages a Muslim to strive in preparation for the hereafter

so that they can achieve true lasting peace by obtaining the gardens of refuge and an eternal resting place.

The Material World - 27

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Islam teaches Muslims that every blessing they possess, such as wealth or children, should be contained in their hand not their heart. An excellent way of achieving this is that each blessing should be used according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, not one's own desire. For example, one should strive to only spend their wealth on things commanded and recommended by Islam, such as a person's own necessities and on the necessities of their dependents while avoiding waste, extravagance and excessiveness. This attitude will prevent one from becoming attached to the blessing meaning, it will ensure the blessing remains in their hands instead of their heart. This is an important concept to understand and act on as it prevents one from becoming too attached to the blessing. As each worldly blessing is bound to pass away this attitude will prevent one from becoming overly sad meaning, becoming grieved and depressed when it eventually does. Keeping the blessing in one's hand might lead to sadness when one eventually loses it but this sadness is acceptable in Islam and does not lead to impatience and mental disorders, such as depression, which severe sadness namely, grief, leads to.

In addition, this attitude prevents one from misusing the blessing which often occurs when it is within one's heart instead of their hands. For example, unnecessarily hoarding wealth and greedily amassing more. This concept has been indicated in chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

“In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”

Keeping things in one's hand instead of their heart will ensure they always remember that the blessing belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and not them. This again prevents impatience when one eventually loses it. This has been indicated in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

“Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."

So a Muslim must strive to use each blessing according to the teachings of Islam thereby, ensuring it remains in their hands instead of their heart which in fact should contain only the love of Allah, the Exalted.

The Material World - 28

I had a thought which I wanted to share. When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim their stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that their stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how Muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, their stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, Muslims do not treat it like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some Muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should

therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

The Material World - 29

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the sudden death of a child celebrity. It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment, yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of gaining more from this world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared. This preparation involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live, life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter, by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities, as this is a part of preparing for the hereafter.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise, they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared, as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare, they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verses 23-24:

"And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.""

The Material World - 30

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the stresses of life and how to navigate through them without becoming affected by mental disorders, such as depression. One thing which can help a muslim to achieve this is to understand that every worldly blessing they possess is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

This not only aids a muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the Exalted, and reach the hereafter safely, then losing it will not have such a detrimental impact on them. They may become sad, which is an acceptable emotion, but they will not become grieved, which leads to impatience and other mental problems, such as depression. This is because they firmly believe the worldly blessing they possessed was only a means, so losing it does not cause a loss in the ultimate goal namely, Paradise, the loss of which is disastrous. Therefore, still possessing and concentrating on the ultimate goal will prevent them from becoming grieved.

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means, they firmly believe they will be provided with other means by Allah,

the Exalted, to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal. This will also prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end goal instead of a means, will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

To conclude, muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This attitude is demonstrated practically when they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is how one can possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their spiritual hearts.

The Material World - 31

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how people strive to create the perfect life. It is quite obvious when observing most people that they strive hard in order to beautify their material world. In fact, many go beyond this by striving to mould their life so that it becomes perfect and permanent. For example, people spend large amounts of wealth on trying to build the perfect home while hoping that it will endure. Companies make billions out of this desire of people to be perfect and timeless, such as cosmetic companies. Some people endure painful operations in an attempt to defy time and achieve perfection. This shows that there is something within a person's soul which desires perfection and permanence. But the strange thing is that no matter how much resources one uses and no matter how much effort they dedicate, these two things namely, perfection and permanence, are not obtainable in this world. This internal desire was placed inside people to make them strive for perfection and permanence in a place where they do exist namely, the hereafter.

Unfortunately, some misunderstood this desire and misplaced it. Muslims should therefore not make this mistake but instead place this desire in the correct place by striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Only then will they be able to fulfil this desire and achieve true perfection and permanence.

The Material World - 32

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a gang of thieves who had been caught and sentenced to prison after the police recovered the property they had stolen.

It is important for muslims to understand that this in reality is the worse situation for the thieves, as they were not only sent to prison but they will also not be able to enjoy the wealth they had stolen after they are released. Meaning, they were judged and sentenced to prison over stealing something they no longer possess. This is the biggest loss, as one could argue if the thieves were judged and sentenced to prison for stealing property they still possess it would have been far better for them, as they could have enjoyed it after they were released from prison.

Muslims should understand the fact that on Judgment Day they will be judged over their actions, both worldly and religious. But the major and important difference is that their worldly actions, such as obtaining unnecessary and excess wealth and properties, will be turned into dust by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 7-8:

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

Just like the thieves who were punished over property they no longer possessed, so will people be judged over their worldly actions and possessions they no longer possess. Can one imagine being sent to Hell over worldly things, such as fame and fortune, they no longer possess? The only things which will still be in their possession on Judgment Day and which will aid them in their greatest moment of need are their religious actions which are the result of using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. So each muslim must decide where they should dedicate the majority of their efforts. Either to worldly things and deeds which will perish and turn into dust with this material world while they face the reckoning over them or dedicate the majority of their efforts to religious deeds which will endure and provide them company, shelter and aid on a Great Day. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””

The Material World - 33

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the importance of having a positive mind-set when dealing with worldly issues.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn ensures one gains peace of mind and body in both worlds, as it encourages one to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

This correct perception is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it is the thing which encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important

characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows, the more focused on the cup of murky water they become, to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead, they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water, to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close by. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person was crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter, worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world, then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier, who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”

The Material World - 34

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on different charity projects and how people sacrificed the things they liked in order to please the needy.

It is important for muslims to understand the importance of chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.”

This verse makes it clear that a person cannot be a true believer meaning, they will possess a defect in their faith, until they are willing to dedicate the things they love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Even though many believe this verse applies to wealth but it in fact means much more. It includes every blessing which a muslim likes and loves. For example, muslims are happy to dedicate their precious time on the things which please them. But they refuse to dedicate time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, beyond the obligatory duties which barely takes an hour or two in one's day. Countless muslims are happy to dedicate their physical strength in different pleasurable activities yet, many of them refuse to dedicate it to the things which please Allah, the Exalted, such as voluntary fasting. More

commonly, people are happy to strive in things which they desire like obtaining excess wealth which they do not need, even if it means they have to do overtime and give up their sleep, yet how many strive in this way in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him? How many give up their precious time in order to learn and act on Islamic knowledge?

It is strange that muslims desire lawful worldly and religious blessings yet, overlook a simple fact. That they will only gain these things when they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is showing gratitude to Him. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

How can they dedicate minimal things to Him and still expect to achieve all their dreams? This attitude is truly strange.

The Material World - 35

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the many difficulties people across the world are facing. It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is good, even if it seems bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad, even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride, it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, "Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given

knowledge said, "Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient." And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves."

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy, yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth, he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case, wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it, even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good, even if it seems bad. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

The Material World - 36

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on sponsoring animals. Firstly, it is important to note Islam teaches muslims the importance of treating all creatures kindly. For example, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 378, mentions a man who was forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, because he fed a thirsty dog. This Hadith concludes by advising that being kind to all creatures leads to reward. None the less, one of the reasons why humanity across the globe is suffering is because many people have prioritised things incorrectly. For example, some are more concerned about the welfare of animals than humans. This is quite obvious when one observes the behaviour of some animal lovers. The majority of muslims have given striving for the temporal world priority over the permanent hereafter. This is obvious when one observes their typical daily routine. Even some of the muslims who try to please Allah, the Exalted, prioritise things incorrectly for example, they give preference to voluntary goods deeds over acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This shift in priorities only occurred when muslims stopped acting on the teachings of Islam and instead acted according to their own desires. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, prioritised everything correctly thereby fulfilling the rights of everyone, as they did not act according to their own desires. They instead acted according to the teachings and the list of priorities set by Islam. This is evident to anyone who has studied their lives.

Just like a student who prioritizes having fun over studying for their exams is unlikely to succeed, so will the people who incorrectly prioritise the different aspects of their lives. Incorrectly prioritising causes one to misplace the things and the people within their lives and it encourages them to devote their efforts and resources incorrectly. All of this leads to a huge mess in one's life, which removes any real peace of mind and body one can obtain.

Humanity as a whole and especially muslims will only find real success and progression in both worlds when they prioritise things correctly, this applies to both worldly and religious matters. This is only possible when one acts according to the teachings of Islam. Reordering this list of priorities will only lead to problems for humanity, which is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history.

The Material World - 37

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the achievements of a celebrity. It described their achievements as their legacy which they will leave behind for people to benefit from years after they have departed from this world.

First of all, it is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Islam not only teaches muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches them to leave a lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit from. In fact, when a muslim passes away and leaves behind anything which is useful, such as an ongoing charity, they will be rewarded for it. This is confirmed in Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4223. So a muslim should strive to perform righteous deeds and send forward as much good as possible but they should also try leaving a good legacy behind which will benefit them after they pass away.

Unfortunately, many muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themselves, as the

moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind. If this legacy is good and beneficial, they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them, then they should prepare something which will, so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. So each muslim should ask themselves what is their legacy?

The Material World - 38

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the death of a celebrity and their worldly achievements. This is connected to a verse of the Holy Quran found in chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 96:

“Whatever you have will end, but what Allah has is lasting...”

The death of this celebrity was a reminder of the many famous people who have passed away and how they were so quickly forgotten by the world, especially the media. Some celebrities were always mentioned during their lifetime in the news but after their passing they were perhaps mentioned once in the year that followed. In addition, the very things they obtained in the material world, such as fame, fortune, authority and a high social status all passed away while they journeyed to the hereafter empty handed.

This news article was also a reminder of the many celebrities who after reaching the top of their industry became depressed and even suicidal. One of the reasons this occurs is that when they reach the top of the mountain after sacrificing so much, such as their modesty, dignity and morals, they do not find what they were looking for namely, contentment and lasting happiness. When they assess their life, they realise that

returning to their previous and more pleasant lifestyle is not possible, as the things they sacrificed have now moved on or faded away. For example, they might have severed a friendship with a good person as they advised them not to sacrifice their self-respect for the sake of fame. They now find themselves surrounded by people who only desire their company for the sake of the material world, such as wealth. This often leads to loneliness, even though they are surrounded by a large entourage. Then they spiral out of control which leads to a huge mental breakdown. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

The key thing to understand is that there is nothing wrong with pursuing worldly success, as long as it is lawful. But one should not sacrifice the limits set by Islam by misusing the blessings they have been granted, such as their modesty, to achieve it. One should also prioritize the hereafter over the material world knowing that whatever worldly thing they obtain will eventually leave them during their life or at the time of their death. If they behave in the opposite manner they too, like the celebrities of this world, will be left empty handed in their grave and they will be forgotten by those who they left behind. So a muslim must fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and to people, while enjoying the material world within the limits of Islam. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The Material World - 39

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a famous athlete whose undefeated streak had been broken. This incident is connected to Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3618. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every worldly thing which is raised high is eventually lowered by Allah, the Exalted.

This does not mean muslims should avoid the material world and trying to achieve success in it. Muslims should strive to obtain a worldly education and a lawful occupation, as it helps one to avoid unlawful wealth and is required to fulfil one's responsibilities. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

“But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world...”

This Hadith actually means that one should not make worldly success their number one priority and instead dedicate most of their efforts in achieving peace of mind and body in both worlds. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

No matter how much worldly success one gains, eventually it will fade away. This fading will occur either when one is alive or their success will part from them when they pass away. Countless people have constructed great empires and achieved much worldly success, yet all of this achievement eventually faded away. How many people have had their name plastered across sky scrapers only for their name to be removed and forgotten after a short while?

This Hadith does not mean that a person will not be given success after facing trouble. Muslims should strive to achieve success in the world and not quit when they face setbacks. The key is to prioritize the success of the hereafter over the material world by using the blessings and success of the material world to achieve success in the hereafter. One can achieve this by striving for lawful worldly success in order to fulfil their responsibilities and duties without waste and extravagance. They should also utilise their worldly success to aid them further in obtaining peace of mind and body in both worlds, by spending their extra wealth in charitable projects. If their worldly success can influence society, then they should use this in a way which benefits others. A muslim should behave in this manner before their worldly success fades away and they lose out on using it to achieve peace of mind and body in both worlds.

Simply put, success in the material world will pass away but the success of the hereafter will endure, therefore muslims should dedicate their efforts accordingly.

The Material World - 40

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the positive and negative influence of society and culture. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3294, advises that whichever path the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, took, the Devil would take a different path, meaning, out of fear of him. One of the reasons why the Devil acted in this way was because he had little influence over Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him. The Devil cannot physically force someone to commit sins. He instead encourages them to do so through whisperings. But in order for them to be effective, he requires a person to possess some sort of worldly desire. Then through his whisperings, he encourages the growth of this worldly desire until it drives the person to act on it thereby committing a sin. The reason the Devil had little effect on Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, was because he had removed worldly desires from his heart. His only desires were connected to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, if muslims desire to minimise the effect the Devil has on them, they should remove unnecessary desires from their heart. This only occurs when one refrains from indulging in the excess and unnecessary aspects of this material world. The more they do this, the more these worldly desires will leave their heart until they reach a point where they only desire to please Allah, the Exalted, in all their actions. The Devil will flee from this person as he knows he will have little effect on them. But the more one indulges in the unnecessary aspects of this material world, the more worldly desires they will possess and therefore, the more influence the Devil will have over them. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verses 39-40:

"[Iblees] said, 'My Lord, because You have put me in error, I will surely make [disobedience] attractive to them [mankind] on earth, and I will mislead them all. Except, among them, Your sincere servants.'"

The Material World - 41

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the main cause for a muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themselves. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving

for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

The Material World - 42

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of muslims from the hearts' of the other nations. This would occur because of the muslim nation's love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the muslims today are greater in number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favoring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. They used the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Whereas, most of the muslims today have adopted the opposite mind-set. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority

is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless, it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for muslims. What he feared was that muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith, this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that muslims should act like one body, when any part of the body suffers from an illness, the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themselves, which is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a muslim to love,

hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the muslims today. This attitude would prevent the Muslims from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This would cause them to lose the support of Allah, the Exalted, which opens the door for their enemies to overpower them.

If muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had, they must strive and prioritize preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining, enjoying and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation.

The Material World - 43

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Worldly success can be broken up into fame, fortune, authority, family, friends and a career.

It is important to understand that even though it is not unlawful to strive for and obtain worldly success, one must understand that worldly success is granted to people as a test. Generally speaking, there are four paths one can choose from after they are granted worldly success which determines whether they pass the test or not. The first path is that after obtaining worldly success, such as a good career, a Muslim loses themselves in their career and prioritizes progressing in their career above all else. They are less bothered about making money and concentrate more on advancing in their career. This type of person is common, whereby they happily give up a higher salary for a lower one just because the latter has more opportunities to progress in their career. Their intention and striving distracts them from finding peace in this world and practically preparing for the Day of Judgement, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The second path one can choose after being granted worldly success is to lose themselves in gaining more and more wealth, such as expanding their business and investing in financial opportunities. This person is less bothered with advancing in their career and spending their wealth but only

cares about making more wealth. Their intention and striving distracts them from obtaining peace of mind and practically preparing for the Day of Judgement, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The third path one can choose after being granted worldly success, is when one becomes engrossed in enjoying the worldly success they have obtained, such as wealth or fame. They worked hard to obtain worldly success and therefore feel entitled to enjoy it. These people are less bothered with making more wealth or advancing in their careers and instead only care about enjoying themselves and therefore lose themselves in entertainment, fun and games, such as going on holidays and attending parties. Their intention and striving distracts them from obtaining peace of mind and practically preparing for the Day of Judgement, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

These three paths causes a person to fail the test of being granted worldly success, even if they adhere to the lawful, as these things were not the reason why the worldly success was granted to them.

The final and correct path one can choose when they are granted worldly success is when they use the success, such as wealth, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Through this, they pass the test of their worldly success and obtain peace of mind and body. They obtain a good balance between making use of their worldly

success in order to lead a comfortable life yet avoid excessiveness, waste and extravagance. This does not mean one cannot enjoy worldly success, but it means success lies in enjoying it in moderation so that one is not distracted from obtaining peace of mind and practically preparing for the Day of Judgement, which involves using the worldly blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is only possible to do when one learns and acts on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is not possible to do for the one who chooses one of the first three paths discussed after they are granted worldly success.

The Material World - 44

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Many Muslims use classic excuses in order to avoid learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, a parent will use their preoccupation with raising their child as an excuse to avoid learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. Anything which prevents one from fulfilling their purpose of creation, which is to use their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is nothing but a punishment and a curse for them.

Firstly, a Muslim must be honest with themselves, as lying to oneself only hinders them from peace of mind and body in both worlds. If a Muslim has time to watch films and television shows, then they have time to learn and act on Islamic knowledge.

Secondly, a Muslim must understand that every worldly thing they have been granted only becomes a blessing when they use it in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This involves learning and acting on Islamic knowledge and fulfilling their duties and responsibilities towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. If these worldly things, such as a spouse, children or a career, prevents one from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, then they should know that these worldly

things have only become a curse and punishment for them, as a direct consequence of their laziness and bad attitude.

One should dedicate whatever time they have to learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. Allah, the Exalted, does not expect Muslims to become scholars, but they must dedicate some time, whatever time they can find to learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, so that they can gradually improve their behaviour towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The Material World - 45

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In order to correctly evaluate the worth of things, one must never accept the views of social media, fashion and culture, as they often get this wrong. For example, social media and culture teaches that having lots of wealth is valuable. Whereas, the truth is that having excess wealth only leads to stress, especially when it is misused.

An excellent way of judging the value of things, which, in most cases, correlates with the teachings of Islam, is by observing whether something endures or not. All things which have real value, such as peace of mind and good deeds, endure. For example, a person who performed a righteous deed, such as the Holy Pilgrimage years earlier will still feel the peace of mind it brings whenever they think about it. Peace of mind granted through the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is something which also endures, irrespective of the situation one faces. Whereas, the things which have little real value never endure, such as fun and entertainment. For example, when one finishes watching a movie, they begin looking for the next thing to watch, as the fun they experienced with the movie vanished when it finished. Going on leisurely holidays is the same. When one returns from holiday, they often begin planning the next one, as the fun they experienced on holiday vanished the moment they returned home. Having friends is another classic example. Many people sacrifice much for the sake of friendship even though those friendships which are rooted in the world often fade away with the passing of time. Best friends become strangers.

Observing things according to whether they endure or not is therefore an excellent way to judge what has real value and what does not. From this one can learn where they should dedicate their efforts and resources. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 96:

"Whatever you have will end, but what Allāh has is lasting..."

The Material World - 46

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. If one observes people, they will clearly see that peace of mind and success do not lie with fame, fortune, authority, family, friends or one's career. This is obvious, as the people who possess the most of these things face more emotional and mental issues than anyone else, such as anxiety, depression, stress and suicidal tendencies and are the most addicted to drugs and alcohol. As Allah, the Exalted, alone, controls the hearts of people, which is the station of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind. The only condition for obtaining it is sincerely obeying Him, by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life..."

Whereas, the person who turns away from this obedience will be prevented from obtaining peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if they have the world at their feet. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

But the point of this discussion is to understand something further. As peace of mind and success are not at all connected to worldly things, such as wealth, it does not mean one should abandon this material world and the opportunities they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, such as the opportunity to educate oneself. Islam is a religion of balance and balance is best even in this case. A Muslim should use the lawful opportunities granted to them without them being prevented from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, one should not abandon education and pursuing a good and lawful job just because peace and success does not lie with them. One must understand that worldly success in itself is not bad, it becomes bad or good depending on how it is used. Therefore, one should use the good and lawful worldly opportunities they have been granted in order to obtain worldly success so that they can increase the amount of good deeds they perform and in order to spread goodness within society. For example, the one who obtains a good job, such as becoming a doctor, should use their salary and social influence in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They can reduce the amount they work, as their high salary covers their expenses

and financial responsibilities easily, so that they can dedicate more time to learning and acting on Islamic knowledge and dedicate more time to taking part in beneficial projects. All of these things will increase one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of doing good deeds and spreading goodness in society. All of these things are difficult or impossible to do when one does not obtain the worldly success someone with a good job obtains. This is the reason why many of the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not refuse the good worldly opportunities that were offered to them, such as being a governor of a city. They completely utilised this worldly success in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore increased their peace of mind and success in both worlds.

To conclude, a Muslim must understand that peace of mind and success in both worlds only lie in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. They should use the good worldly opportunities granted to them while maintaining this obedience in order to increase their peace and success in both worlds and they should not turn away from worldly success, unless they truly believe they will not be able to maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted.

Knowledge - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it is easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it. The knowledge mentioned includes useful worldly knowledge as well as religious knowledge, as the former often aids one to remain sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted. For example, the one who seeks useful worldly knowledge in order to obtain a lawful occupation will find it easier to avoid earning unlawful wealth. This attitude will aid them in their journey towards Paradise.

In addition, the path of Paradise is only journeyed by those who adopt piety. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining

from His prohibitions, facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The root of piety is therefore gaining and acting on religious knowledge. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

But the important thing to note is that a muslim's intention to seek and act on knowledge must be to please Allah, the Exalted. Whoever seeks religious knowledge for a worldly reason, such as showing off, has been warned of Hell, if they fail to sincerely repent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

In addition, a muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion are the blessings obtained by a group of muslims who study and recite the Holy Quran in a Mosque. Namely, tranquillity and mercy will descend upon them, the Angels will surround them and Allah, the Exalted, will mention them to the Heavenly Angels.

This indicates the virtue of learning and studying the Holy Quran. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5027, that the best person is the one who learns the Holy Quran and teaches it to others. It is important to note, this includes acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran. This group of people are so special that Allah, the Exalted, will even forgive the person who unintentionally joins them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6408. It is hoped that those who perform this deed regularly will be granted the gifts mentioned earlier namely, tranquility and the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, throughout their day. Whoever receives these blessings will find peace and ease in all aspects of their life and when they encounter a difficulty these gifts will safely guide them through it.

It is hoped that whoever receives the company of the Angels in this world will be granted their company at the time of their death and in the hereafter. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 31:

“We [angels] were your allies in worldly life and [are so] in the Hereafter...”

Knowledge - 2

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2645, that when Allah, the Exalted, desires to give someone good, He provides them with Islamic knowledge.

There is no doubt that every muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many muslims incorrectly believe that the good they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career, this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important to note, a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where good lies yet it is a shame how many muslims do not place much value in this. They, in most cases, only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more, such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts to worldly things, believing true good is found there. Many muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas today, one can study Islamic teachings without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips.

A Muslim must not be fooled into believing that Islamic knowledge only explains how to perform rituals and what is unlawful and lawful. In reality, it teaches people how to adopt the correct attitude and behaviour so that they use all the worldly blessings they have been granted correctly so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds thereby achieving peace of mind and success in both worlds. The only One who can teach this to mankind is the One who created and knows all things namely, Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, prioritising gaining and acting on worldly knowledge over religious knowledge is not wise.

Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it. This in turn will lead to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Knowledge - 3

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3257, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against asking too many questions, as this led to the destruction of the past nations. Muslims should instead do what they have been commanded, according to their capacity, and refrain from what they have been prohibited from.

Muslims should not adopt this mentality as people who have a habit of asking too many questions often fail in fulfilling their duties and from acquiring beneficial knowledge, as they are too busy asking and researching about less important and sometimes irrelevant information. This mentality can inspire a person to argue and debate over these types of issues also. Unfortunately, this attitude is quite widespread amongst muslims today, as they often argue about non obligatory and less important issues, instead of concentrating on fulfilling their obligatory duties and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, correctly, meaning, fulfilling them with their full etiquettes and conditions.

A muslim should instead research and query about topics which are relevant and important to understand for both worldly and religious matters otherwise they will follow in the footsteps of the people mentioned in this Hadith and only make their own lives more difficult. In respect to one's faith, relevance is determined by deciding whether learning something will increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. If it will not, then

they should not waste their time researching and learning this piece of knowledge. In respect to one's worldly life, relevance is determined by deciding whether learning something will help one fulfill their worldly duties, such as their duties at work. If it will not, then they should not waste their time researching and learning this piece of knowledge.

Finally, one must ensure they avoid the mentality mentioned in the main Hadith, especially, when they study Islamic teachings, as one can easily turn what should be a means of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every aspect of one's life, to an academic study on Islam which has no practical effects on their life and behaviour. The latter attitude can easily be adopted when one persists on researching and learning about knowledge which will not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. This is easily identified as the knowledge which Allah, the Exalted, has not spoken about in the Holy Quran nor what has been discussed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in his Hadiths. All religious knowledge not discussed in these two sources of guidance is irrelevant and therefore not needed to guide one to peace and success in both worlds. If it was needed, it would have been discussed in these two sources of guidance. Therefore, any religious knowledge rooted in the two sources of guidance is relevant and must be researched and acted on, all other religious knowledge should be avoided.

Knowledge - 4

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge, muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others, such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases yet the outcomes are very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters, as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

In addition, one must couple their good intention with acting on their knowledge, as knowledge without action is not beneficial knowledge, it is merely information. Failing to act on one's knowledge is like a doctor who fails to implement their knowledge of medicine to treat people. The same way they do not benefit themselves or others, neither does a Muslim who possesses Islamic knowledge and fails to implement it. In fact, this person has been compared to a donkey that carries books of knowledge. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”

In addition, whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2649. Therefore, Muslims must share the useful knowledge they gain with others. It is simply foolish not to as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a Muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. Those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who

shared it with others became known as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

Finally, the purpose of gaining knowledge is not to defeat others in debates. The duty of a Muslim is to present the truth to others correctly with strong evidence. They have not been assigned the duty of forcing people to accept the truth through argumentation and debating. This attitude only pushes people further from the truth. Instead, one should explain the truth to people without arguing and show this truth by acting on it themselves. This is how the righteous predecessors behaved and this method is much more effective in bringing others towards the truth.

Knowledge - 5

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that learning one verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer. And learning a topic of Islamic knowledge, even if one does not act on it, is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

Learning a verse includes studying and more importantly, practically implementing its teachings in one's life. And it is important to note, a muslim will only gain this reward when they sincerely strive to act on the topic of knowledge they have learned and practically implement it when the opportunity presents itself. Only when one does not gain the opportunity to act on their topic of Islamic knowledge will they gain the reward of offering 1000 cycles of prayer, even if they do not actually act on it. This is because Allah, the Exalted, judges and rewards people based on their intention and will therefore grant reward to those who would sincerely act when given the opportunity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Finally, as indicated by the main Hadith under discussion gaining and acting on knowledge is far superior to voluntary worship. This is because the majority of muslims do not understand the Arabic language and are therefore less likely to improve their behavior and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in a positive way as they do not understand the language they use to worship Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, learning and acting on knowledge

is much more likely to inspire one to change for the better. This is the reason why some muslims spend decades performing voluntary worship yet, do not improve their behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, or people in the slightest. This by far is not the best course of action.

In addition, one cannot worship nor obey Allah, the Exalted, in their daily activities nor fulfill the rights of people correctly without knowledge. The ignorant person will commit sins without realizing it, as they are not aware what actions are considered sins. An ignorant person often fails to perform good deeds with their full conditions and etiquettes, so their many acts of voluntary worship will be deficient. Whereas, the knowledgeable may perform less good deeds but they will perform them correctly thereby gaining more reward than the ignorant worshipper.

Knowledge - 6

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2520, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics of a fortunate person.

The first characteristic is that they act on their useful knowledge. Knowledge is only beneficial when one acts on it, otherwise it is something which will testify against them on Judgment Day. Not acting on one's knowledge and expecting to obtain success is as foolish as the one who possesses a map to their desired destination yet does not use it and still hopes to reach their destination safely. It is vital for muslims to fulfill both aspects of knowledge. The first is gaining it from a reliable source and the second is to sincerely act on it for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must find the path to Paradise and journey down it in order to reach it.

Knowledge - 7

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who possesses the following characteristics.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the fortunate person is the one who acts according to their knowledge. This is important to do as ignoring one's knowledge and acting contrary to it is a sign of great ignorance. This type of knowledge is not beneficial at all. In fact, it will only testify against a person on Judgment Day. Knowledge is only useful when it is correctly acted on, just like a map only leads to the desired destination when it is used. Failing to act on knowledge will not take one down the path to Paradise, it will only leave them in darkness; confused and lost.

Knowledge - 8

I had a thought which I wanted to share. The elders of a family, especially parents, often use a statement which they believe indicates their right guidance namely, elders know best. To be honest this statement was true in the day of the righteous predecessors as the elders at that time used to strive in gaining and acting on beneficial knowledge. They put aside their own opinions and thinking and instead adopted the advice of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of their sincere efforts they were granted right guidance by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways...”

Therefore, this statement applied to them and the youngsters in those days benefited if they acted on the advice of these elders. But unfortunately times have changed. In this day and age the majority of elders do not seek nor act on beneficial knowledge instead the vast majority act on their cultural practices which in most cases do not have a foundation in Islamic teachings. They flee from beneficial knowledge and are very content with these teachings based on made up cultural practices. Because of this ignorance elders are now sometimes right and sometimes wrong. Therefore, the statement elders know best no longer applies.

It is important to note this does not mean a Muslim should ignore or disrespect their elders as this completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. They should instead strive to gain correct beneficial knowledge, hear the advice of others, including their elders, and then make a choice which is indicated by Islam in all their matters even if it contradicts the opinions of others. A Muslim should not blindly follow their elders as this in most cases will lead them away from the teachings of Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 116:

“And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but misjudging.”

This is possible to do while maintaining respect for others especially one's elders. If Muslims do this then perhaps a day will come when this statement will once again be true.

Knowledge - 9

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often complain about feeling disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, even though they attend religious gatherings and listen to religious lectures. One of the main reasons this occurs is because they have adopted the incorrect attitude which contradicts the attitude of the righteous predecessors. They take part in these activities looking for lawful entertainment. They do not intend to seek and act upon beneficial knowledge in order to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which leads to the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. This was the attitude of the righteous predecessors who only intended the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, in all their activities. A good way to determine whether one is acting with the right attitude is by assessing themselves after taking part in the activity. If they gained useful knowledge or were reminded of useful knowledge which inspires them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then it is useful. If this does not occur then either the religious gathering or lecture has a fault in it or the listener has a fault in their intention. Either way they have not fulfilled the main purpose of religious gatherings or lectures. A Muslim should avoid gatherings and lectures which concentrate more on entertainment such as telling stories which may fascinate the crowd but have no beneficial lessons in them. Only through attending the correct gatherings with the correct intention will a Muslim achieve the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. Otherwise they are merely taking part in gatherings of entertainment which will not improve their character nor will they increase them in the obedience and closeness of Allah, the Exalted.

Knowledge - 10

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to understand that their worldly knowledge irrespective of how much they possess is not enough to gain success in their religious life. Even though, gaining useful worldly knowledge is praiseworthy according to the teachings of Islam as it is an excellent means for one to obtain lawful provision for themselves and their dependents yet, it is not enough to safely guide them through their religious life. For example, in most cases, worldly knowledge will not teach someone how to safely journey through a difficulty or a test in a way which pleases Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward in both worlds. The obligatory duties and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cannot be acted on by a Muslim who only possesses worldly knowledge. In fact, religious knowledge has the power to guide one to success in both worlds whereas worldly knowledge will only aid someone in this world. The one who possesses religious knowledge will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which will result in such blessings and grace that they will find success in both worlds. Whereas, worldly knowledge will inspire one to deduce their own path in religion instead of acting according to the teachings of the rightly guided namely, the righteous predecessors. Religion is not to about creating one's own path it is simply to adhere to Islamic teachings.

Unfortunately, many Muslims who possess worldly knowledge do not realise this important point which only reduces their chances of achieving success in both worlds. Therefore, Muslims should strive to obtain and act on both religious and useful worldly knowledge if they desire success in both worlds. This is why gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

Knowledge - 11

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Even though the amount of Islamic scholars, lecturers and Islamic educational material has increased over time yet, the strength of Muslims has only decreased. There are many factors for this. One of the main reasons is that many scholars have not adopted the correct intention when teaching others. Instead of following in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by teaching only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they taught for other reasons such as to gain popularity and worldly things. For example, they often strive to be in the spotlight of gatherings and events and are not pleased with a seat which is to one side they instead desire a central seat. When their intention became like this Allah, the Exalted, removed the positive effect of their speeches and therefore they have little positive influence over their listeners.

Another factor is that the intention of the listeners is not correct. They attend lectures not for sake of Allah, the Exalted, and changing for the better instead many only attend lectures searching for a spiritual high just like a music concert. They seek entertainment not reformation. They please themselves by claiming they are working hard in order to act on Islamic teachings by attending many events and gatherings yet, because of their attitude they do not change for the better by acting on the lessons they have heard. They believe merely listening is good enough to please Allah, the Exalted, and to succeed. It is why some attend lectures for decades yet do not change at all for the better.

Finally, many of the scholars failed to act on what they preach. For example, they teach others to unite yet they are disconnected from other

scholars and fail to aid other scholars and institutions in good as they fear they will be forgotten if they do so. They advise others to turn away from the material world yet, they are the most engrossed in it. Even though, they claim to be detached in their hearts, which in most cases is not true, they still have deviated from the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was the most detached from this world both outwardly and inwardly. They should have shown a practical example instead of saying one thing and doing another. This caused their teachings to become ineffective.

Knowledge - 12

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how some people achieve success only after becoming experts in their field. It is important to note, Islam teaches muslims that they do not need to become scholars in order to achieve real success in both worlds. All they require is to strive to learn and act on the simple teachings of Islam according to their ability and potential. This is easily achievable by a non-scholar. For example, a muslim can begin by understanding and acting on three verses of the Holy Quran which will guide them towards eternal success. The first is chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

According to this verse a muslim has been guaranteed right guidance and success in all aspects of their life as long as they fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely

give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The next verse is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

This verse helps a muslim to overcome all difficulties they could possibly face during their life. A muslim must understand each situation has many beneficial wisdoms behind it which are not immediately apparent. One can find many examples within their own life when they believed something was good but it ended up being bad and vice versa. Therefore, they should patiently endure each difficulty, by avoiding complaining and maintaining their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, knowing the situation is best for them, even if they do not observe the wisdoms behind them.

The final verse is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity..."

This verse reminds muslims that no difficulty or obligation they must fulfil is beyond their strength to endure or fulfil. This understanding removes impatience and removes despair when facing difficulties and inspires one with the strength to overcome laziness and fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

Islam teaches simple yet far reaching lessons which muslims must study and act on. But these lessons do not require one to become a scholar in order to achieve a successful outcome, unlike many worldly things which require a person to become an expert before they can obtain success.

Knowledge - 13

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how the exchanging of information and knowledge has increased over the years especially, over social media.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier, yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. They believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

To conclude, the purpose of Islamic knowledge is not to entertain people. Its purpose is to practically guide people through all the situations they face in this world so that they obtain peace of mind in this world and Paradise in the next. The one who fails to implement the knowledge they listen to will not obtain this right guidance. Their

example is like the one who has directions to a safe place yet fails to practically follow these directions to safety. Or like the sick patient who is prescribed the cure yet fails to take the medicine. This attitude must be avoided. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Knowledge - 14

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It mentioned how the marriage rates in a certain country were decreasing over time. The people claimed that they did not desire to take on the responsibilities of marriage.

If a person accepted a job offer without knowing the information linked to it, such as the responsibilities of the job, their salary and any insurance offered, this person would be labelled absolutely crazy by others. An intelligent person would never accept a job offer without knowing these important details. Yet, many people are desperate to take on certain duties without possessing knowledge on the responsibilities attached to them. For example, these people are desperate to get married, yet they possess little or no knowledge on the responsibilities and duties of a husband or a wife and what the rights of each spouse are. This is a major reason why the divorce rates amongst muslims has skyrocketed over recent years. Similarly, these types of people are desperate to have children, yet possess little or no knowledge on the responsibilities of raising a child, such as the rights of parents and children. Again, this is a major cause why the number of muslim youth in prisons has greatly increased in recent years. Couples have children but fail to raise them in the correct way. How could they when they do not possess the knowledge to do so?

It is vital for muslims to first learn and understand the responsibilities of the things they desire to do before they step into the situation. As without this knowledge, they will cause nothing but trouble for themselves and others. The same way they do not accept a job offer without knowing its

responsibilities, they should never take on other duties which are harder than a worldly job, such as marriage, without knowing the responsibilities involved.

Knowledge - 15

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on some people who travelled to a foreign country and broke a law which they were unaware of during their trip. It is important to understand that the famous statement ignorance is bliss is not true especially, in respect to religious affairs and the hereafter. Unfortunately, some muslims believe just because they do not know an Islamic rule they are exempt from obeying it and Allah, the Exalted, will not hold them accountable for it. This is one of the worse types of ignorance, as Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that there are no excuses and muslims must learn and act on the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared this to be a duty on all muslims in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. It is a trap of the Devil to believe ignorance is an acceptable excuse and one does not need to gain knowledge about Islam. If a government does not accept this excuse, how can one expect Allah, the Exalted, to? Just like a person who takes on a responsibility is expected to know the rules attached to it, such as being a licensed driver, the one who accepts Islam as their religion is responsible for learning the rules linked to it. Therefore, muslims must avoid ignorance, as it will not benefit them in this world and it will certainly not aid them in the hereafter. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 149:

“Say, “Allah has the most conclusive argument...””

Knowledge - 16

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will

become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themselves from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

Knowledge - 17

Listening correctly to Islamic knowledge is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one's mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one's behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear Islamic knowledge and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

Knowledge - 18

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims who study Islamic teachings to avoid an attitude which prevents them from benefiting from their studying. This is when one studies Islamic teachings with purely an academic attitude. The academic attitude is observed in those who pursue worldly knowledge and research. The worldly knowledge these students gain does not influence the way they live and interact with Allah, the Exalted, or the creation. It is a purely academic study which has no bearing on the student's everyday life, behaviour and attitude. This can occur in students of Islamic knowledge also. They become fascinated by the knowledge they gain but fail to understand the lessons and morals behind the knowledge and therefore the knowledge fails to mould their character, behaviour and life in a positive way whereby they increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. And their knowledge fails to encourage them to fulfill the rights of people, the least of which is to treat others how one desires to be treated by people. Approaching Islamic studies in a purely academic way may increase a person's knowledge but it will not mould their character in a positive way. This makes the knowledge they have gained fruitless. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

"...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]..."

One must always bear in mind that their purpose and intention to study Islamic teachings should be to improve their behaviour towards Allah,

the Exalted, and people. If this does not occur then they are not on the right path and are therefore far from right guidance.

Knowledge - 19

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Many Muslims have the habit of always searching, reading and listening to Islamic knowledge taken from sources other than the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They behave in this manner as they desire to experience something new and different and therefore behave dismissively towards the teachings from these two sources of guidance. But they fail to understand that the key to peace of mind and success in both worlds lies in understanding and acting on these two sources of guidance. This is indicated in many verses, such as chapter 16 An Nahl, Verse 89:

"...And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims."

The clarification refers to all the things one needs to gain peace and success in both worlds.

Unfortunately, even many Islamic preachers have adopted this attitude in order to please and please their audiences. The time they should be preaching directly from the two sources of guidance, such as the Friday sermon, they dedicate to unauthentic events and stories from alternate sources.

In addition, seeking knowledge from alternate sources can lead to learning and acting on unverified and inaccurate knowledge, as many of these stories and events taken from other sources are not authentic and have been fabricated. And many of these stories deal with irrelevant knowledge and topics which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day. Furthermore, many of these stories and events are based on things which contradict Islamic teachings, but as these contradictions are often subtle they are overlooked by the majority of the audience. For example, these stories often push the topic of complete and unquestionable obedience to one's spiritual teacher, even though this is not something the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did with each other, even during the time of the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, there are many authentic and widely known events when the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, respectfully challenged the method of the rightly guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them. For example, Umar Ibn Khattab and many other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, respectfully challenged, the first Caliph of Islam, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, when he decided to fight against the Muslims who refused to donate the obligatory charity. Even though, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, was correct in his decision, none the less, the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not blindly follow him. They instead, respectfully objected to his decision until he clarified his decision to them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 124.

Total and unquestionable obedience is only for Allah, the Exalted, and His divinely guided Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

To conclude, a Muslim should understand that learning and acting on the two sources of guidance leads to peace and success in both worlds. In fact, the more they dedicate themselves to these two sources of guidance, the more doors of wisdoms and understanding will be opened for them. Therefore, there is no need to search for right guidance and Islamic knowledge from unreliable and unauthentic sources. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and is the only path to success. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“As for those who struggle in Our cause, We will surely guide them along Our Way. And Allah is certainly with the good-doers.”

Knowledge - 20

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Striving to gain worldly or religious knowledge which will aid one to obey Allah, the Exalted, is praiseworthy in Islam. Unfortunately, many communities within Muslims fail to encourage their children, especially their daughters, towards education, as they claim they will simply get married, have children and live as house wives/mums. Even though, there is no harm in a woman choosing to be a house mum/wife if she desires to be one, none the less there are many benefits of a worldly education which must not be overlooked. A worldly education is important as it helps to shape and mould one's character. Through it, one learns how the world works and how to deal with different situations and types of people. All of these things will aid a Muslim woman to deal with the different situations she is bound to face in life.

In addition, a worldly education which leads to a good career allows a Muslim woman to be more selective when choosing a spouse. Whereas, an uneducated woman will always have less freedom of choice. Being more selective will allow a Muslim woman to choose a suitable spouse, according to the teachings of Islam, who will fulfill her rights.

Having a worldly education also causes others to respect her more, such as her husband. The one who is respected more is bound to be treated better by others.

Finally, the educated Muslim woman who has a career becomes financially independent of all others, such as her husband. This will cause others to respect her more and it will reduce the chances of her being wronged by her husband, as a major cause of a wife being mistreated by her husband is when he knows she is completely dependent on him. In many cases, if the abuse is too much, an uneducated woman is much less likely to walk away from her abusive husband as she is completely dependent on him. She may well be turned away by her parents also, as they cannot afford to take care of her and her children. This often occurs within the Muslim community. Whereas, if the Muslim woman was educated, she is in the right financial position to leave her husband and provide for herself and her children through her own career. This does not mean she should leave her husband over petty issues, as this is childish and criticised by Islam. But it means that a worldly education gives a woman financial freedom, something which is vital when facing marriage difficulties, such as divorce.

These are just some reasons why it is vital for Muslims to gain a worldly education for themselves and encourage the next generation to do the same.

Knowledge - 21

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In the following verse of the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, criticizes a mentality which the past nations adopted, which has now been adopted by the Muslim nation. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verse 53:

"But they [the people] divided their religion among them into portions [sects] - each faction, in what it has, rejoicing."

If one observes the Muslim nation, they will see this attitude amongst countless schools of thought and sects. Each firmly believes they are on the side of the Angels and in many cases, they criticise and condemn the other sects and schools of thought. They are completely satisfied with their interpretations and understanding of Islam without any signs of doubts in their creed. It is strange to observe so many different schools of thought yet all of them are completely sure they alone are on the right path.

One of the main reasons this attitude is adopted by people is due to misplaced loyalty. Instead of following in the footsteps of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, whose loyalty was to none other than Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the people after them placed their loyalty to their school of thought and their elders above all else. Even if they felt like an Islamic concept taken from another school of thought

seemed more accurate, they still rejected it and instead followed the interpretation put forward by their own school of thought, simply out of blind loyalty. As people are not perfect, their interpretation of Islamic teachings will never be completely perfect. Therefore, no school of thought, which relies on the interpretations given by their elders, can be completely perfect. Someone who is loyal to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will recognize this truth and will therefore accept the best interpretation of Islamic teachings from any school of thought. Muslims must avoid blind loyalty and blind following as it can lead to misguidance and as it contradicts the way of Islam. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

"Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me..."

Instead, one must maintain their loyalty to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by accepting and acting on the best interpretations of Islamic knowledge, irrespective of who it comes from.

Humility - 1

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person will be raised in rank when they live with humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This occurs as humility is an important aspect of servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. The opposite of humility which is pride only belongs to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, as everything which people possess was created and granted by Him. Understanding this reality ensures one avoids pride and instead shows humility by obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, and leads to true greatness in both worlds.

Humility - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person who possesses even an atom's worth of pride in their spiritual heart will not enter Paradise. He clarified that pride is when a person rejects the truth and looks down on others.

No amount of good deeds will benefit someone who possesses pride. This is quite obvious when one observes the Devil and how his countless years of worship did not benefit him when he became proud. In fact, the following verse clearly connects pride with disbelief, so a muslim must avoid this evil characteristic at all costs. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

"And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers."

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their real status in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted. They may believe they are great because of the few insincere and imperfect good deeds they have done while they are disliked by Allah, the Exalted, because of their many sins. In addition,

looking down upon others is foolish as one is unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate end of others. Meaning, the person they look down upon may well die as a sincere Muslim whereas, they may die as a disbeliever.

In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs are only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to oneself is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

This is the reason why pride belongs to Allah, the Exalted, as He alone is the Creator and innate Owner of all things. The one who challenges Allah, the Exalted, in pride will be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4090.

A muslim should instead follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and adopt humility. The humble truly recognize that all the good they possess and all the evil they are protected from comes from no one except Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, humility is more fitting for a person than pride. A person should not be fooled into believing humility leads to disgrace, as no one has been more honored than the humble servants of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed an increase in status for the one who adopts humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029. A humble person accepts the truth, irrespective of who it

comes from, as they know the source of truth is none other than Allah, the Exalted. Instead of looking down on others, they look at others with the eye of mercy and compassion and support this with sincere actions, all the while hoping Allah, the Exalted, will look upon them with mercy and compassion. They understand that one will be treated by Allah, the Exalted, according to how they treat others. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376.

Humility - 3

This point is connected to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

“And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily...”

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themselves before

Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom's worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

Humility - 4

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who possesses the following characteristics.

The first characteristic is humility without a shortcoming meaning, weakness. The humble one submits, accepts and acts on the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, thereby proving their servanthood to Him. They readily accept the truth when it is presented to them, even if it contradicts their desires and irrespective of who delivers it to them. Meaning, they do not reject the truth believing they know best. They do not look down at others, believing they are superior to them because of any worldly thing they possess or because of their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. They understand that all the worldly blessings they possess, belong to and were created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they have nothing to be proud of. In addition, they understand that doing good deeds is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as the inspiration, opportunity, strength and ability to do a good deed all come from Allah, the Exalted. In addition, only a fool adopts pride as one does not know their final outcome or the final outcome of others. Meaning, they may die while Allah, the Exalted, is not pleased with them and even in a state of disbelief. Understanding these truths will prevent a person from the deadly sin of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Humility without weakness means that a muslim always demonstrates kindness to others but is not afraid to defend themselves if necessary and stand up for the truth nor does their humility cause them to appear disgraced and dishonored in the eyes of others.

Charity - 1

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 661, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that when a muslim donates a tiny amount of charity, such as a single date fruit from lawful earnings, Allah, the Exalted, will give reward on Judgment Day equivalent to a large mountain.

The first thing to note is that Allah, the Exalted, is only pleased with wealth which is obtained lawfully and utilized in a lawful manner. Any wealth which is obtained unlawfully will corrupt any righteous deed it is used upon, such as charity or performing the Holy Pilgrimage with it. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, clearly warns that a person's supplication will be rejected if they obtain and utilize the unlawful. If one's supplication is rejected how can any other action be accepted by Allah, the Exalted?

Finally, this Hadith indicates the importance of spending in anyway which pleases Allah, the Exalted, such as spending on one's needs and the needs of their dependents. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. Allah, the Exalted, will greatly reward those who spend in the correct way according to their intention meaning, the quality of their spending and not according to quantity. Therefore, muslims should correct their intention by spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of how much or little it is. It is important for a muslim to spend according to their means and never worry about how much or little they spend. It is hoped that whoever spends according to their means will be granted reward

according to the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, which is beyond comprehension. But the one who holds back will miss out on this great reward.

In addition, the main Hadith also includes using one's other lawful worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as aiding others emotionally and physically. As long as one aids others in what is good for the sake of pleasing Allah, the Exalted, and they do not seek gratitude or praise from people, they will receive an uncountable reward.

Charity - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2336, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every day two Angels supplicate to Allah, the Exalted. The first asks Allah, the Exalted, to compensate the one who spends for His sake. The second asks Allah, the Exalted, to destroy the one who withholds.

The aim of this Hadith is to encourage one to become generous and avoid being stingy. It is important to note that spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, does not only involve the obligatory charity but also includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of their dependents, without waste and extravagance, as this has been commanded by Islam. Anyone who fails to spend on these elements deserves for their wealth to be destroyed, as they have failed to fulfil its purpose which in reality makes wealth useless. It is important to note, spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, never leads to an overall loss as a person is compensated one way or another. In fact the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed that charity does not decrease one's wealth in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 39:

“...But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it...”

A muslim should remember a generous person is close to Allah, the Exalted, close to Paradise, close to people and far from Hell. Whereas, the stingy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Finally, it is important to note that this Hadith applies to all blessings one possesses, such as their good health, not just wealth. So if one fails to dedicate and use their blessings in the correct way, as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, the supplication of the Angel will go against them. The destruction mentioned in the main Hadith does not necessarily refer to losing the blessing but includes the worldly blessing becoming a source of stress and difficulty for them in both worlds. This can be easily observed in those who fail to use their blessings correctly, such as their wealth. The very wealth they obtain and hoard hoping it will become a source of peace for them becomes the source of their stress and anxiety. Therefore, it is vital for muslims to correctly use each blessing according to the teachings of Islam so that they receive more in both worlds, which in reality is true gratitude. Otherwise, they may well lose the blessing forever. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

Charity - 3

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6444, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the rich in this world will be poor in the hereafter unless they spend their blessings correctly but these people are a few in number.

This means that the majority of wealthy people incorrectly spend their wealth. Meaning, on things which are either vain and therefore provide them with no benefit in the hereafter and no real benefit in this world. Or they spend on sinful things which will become a burden for them in both worlds. Or they spend on lawful things in a way disliked by Islam such as being wasteful or extravagant. Because of these reasons the rich will become poor on Judgment Day, as they did not use their blessings, such as their wealth, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This poverty will lead to a difficult accountability, stress, regrets and even punishment.

In addition, those who hoard their wealth will find that their wealth abandons them at their grave and so they will reach the hereafter empty handed meaning, as a pauper. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379. The deceased will leave the wealth behind for others to enjoy while they are held accountable for earning and hoarding it.

Finally, as the wealthy are distracted by gaining, hoarding, safeguarding and increasing their wealth, it distracts them from performing righteous deeds, which is the thing that will make someone rich on Judgment Day. In reality, losing out on this will make them poor.

It is important to note, spending wealth correctly is not only donating charity but includes one's spending on their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without being wasteful or extravagant.

The truly rich person is the one who uses their blessings, such as their wealth, correctly as prescribed by Islam. This person will be rich in this world and in the next. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

In reality, this person takes their blessings with them to the hereafter. This attitude also provides them with free time which allows them to perform righteous deeds, which in turn, only increases their richness in the hereafter.

Finally, the one who uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, has demonstrated gratitude to Him. This will lead to an increase in blessings for them in both worlds. This is the correct definition of richness. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

Charity - 4

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6806, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned seven groups of people who will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

This shade will protect them from the horrors of the Day of Judgment which includes the unbearable heat caused by the Sun being brought within two miles of the creation. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421.

One of these groups includes a person who donates secret charity. Even though donating charity publically can invite and encourage others to do the same, which increases one's reward depending on how many people follow their behaviour which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351, yet, donating charity in secret avoids the dangerous sin of showing off, which destroys one's deed. When a muslim donates in secret it indicates their sincerity to only please Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, this Hadith did not set a limit of how much charity must be donated. So a muslim has no excuse if they fail to act on this advice as Allah, the Exalted, observes the quality of a deed meaning, a person's sincerity, not quantity. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

In addition, charity in Islam is not only restricted to donating wealth. In fact, it encompasses all good deeds, such as commanding good and forbidding evil. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1671. As long as one of these righteous deeds is done in secret without the person mentioning it to others it is hoped they will fulfil this Hadith and be granted shade on Judgment Day.

Charity - 5

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim should save themselves from Hell even by giving half a date fruit in charity.

This Hadith, like many other teachings of Islam, indicates the importance of quality over quantity. The Devil often puts off muslims from performing righteous deeds by making them believe the deed is too small and therefore insignificant to Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, even other ignorant Muslims often discourage others from certain righteous deeds claiming they are insignificant and unnecessary.

It is important for a muslim not to fall for this trap and instead strive to perform all righteous deeds, big or small, as Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly observes one's quality and judges people based on it. An aspect of this quality is one's intention, meaning, whether one is doing it purely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, or for some other reason, such as showing off.

A muslim should firstly concentrate on correcting the quality of their good deed, such as possessing a good intention, and then ensure that the source of the good deed, such as giving charity, is from a lawful source, as any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful will not be accepted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 661. Next, a muslim should perform all voluntary righteous deeds

according to their means and strength. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465, that the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are the regular ones, even if they are considered small.

In addition, regularly performing good deeds is more likely to change a muslim for the better compared to doing a big deed once in a blue moon. In respect to voluntary charity, a muslim should donate regularly according to their means, even if it is a single pound, and firmly believe Allah, the Exalted, will turn this into a mountain of reward on Judgment Day. This in fact, has been promised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 662.

To conclude, a muslim should concentrate on quality over quantity and perform all types of good deeds regularly according to their means and strength.

Charity - 6

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised three things. The first is that charity does not decrease one's wealth.

This is because whatever a muslim spends for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to any blessing, such as time, Allah, the Exalted, will compensate them. This compensation will be much more than what they originally used. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?...”

For example, Allah, the Exalted, may grant the one who spends for His sake with financial opportunities which leads to an overall increase in wealth. In addition, this could be referring to the reality that whatever is destined to be spent on a person, which is their true wealth, can never change irrespective of their behaviour or the behaviour of the entire creation. In fact, a person's provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. So in reality, one's charity will not change the amount of wealth which is destined to be spent on them, such as wealth spent on their food. Finally, charity does not reduce one's wealth, as one is only depositing their wealth in their hereafter account. This is like the one

who transfers money between two bank accounts their own. In this respect, charity does not reduce one's wealth, as the real beneficiary is oneself. Remembering this will prevent one from seeking gratitude from those they aid and it will prevent pride, as one is, in reality, benefiting no one other than themselves when they give charity.

Charity - 7

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6006, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim can gain the same reward as the one who fasts every day and offers the voluntary prayer all night if they financially support a widow or a poor person.

In this busy modern world muslims often struggle to make time to perform voluntary righteous deeds, such as voluntary fasts or the voluntary night prayer. Islam, as always, gives everyone, irrespective of their lifestyle, a convenient way to receive reward from Allah, the Exalted. In this case, a muslim can financially support a widow or poor person in order to obtain this great reward. It is even easier in this day and age to sponsor the needy as one does not need to journey to them in order to aid them. One can use reputable and trustworthy charities in order to donate regularly. And a muslim must not be fooled and deterred from donating by believing their money will not reach the needy as Allah, the Exalted, will reward them according to their intention, irrespective of if the money reaches the poor or not. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim's duty is to donate through a reputable and trustworthy charity with the correct intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted.

Sponsoring the needy is not expensive as most people spend more money on their monthly phone bill and other unnecessary luxury things. The sad truth is that if each financially-able muslim sponsored a needy person it would dramatically decrease poverty in the world.

Finally, the one who cannot afford to do this should encourage the one who can afford it and as a result they will receive the reward of donating the charity. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674.

This therefore, leaves no reason why all Muslims should miss out on obtaining this easy reward.

Charity - 8

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 664, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that charity extinguishes the anger of Allah, the Exalted, and protects one against an evil death.

This charity includes both obligatory and voluntary charity. As mentioned in this Hadith, charity has a strong positive effect as wealth is often a beloved worldly thing to people. So when they give it up for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, by donating it to the needy, Allah, the Exalted, averts His anger from them, anger caused by their disobedience. When this occurs the person will become encompassed by the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which will guide them through the difficulties, temptations and tests they face in this world safely, so that when they reach their death, they die in submission to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, as a true muslim.

An evil death is when one dies without their faith. This can occur when one possesses weak faith, which is a result of their ignorance of Islamic knowledge. The more one gains and acts on Islamic knowledge, the stronger their faith will become. An evil death can also occur when one persists on major sins, such as abandoning the obligatory prayers. It does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will end up in the hereafter. It is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, that a generous person is close to Allah, the Exalted, close to people, close to Paradise and far from Hell.

A muslim should therefore make it their habit to donate charity regularly, according to their means, as Allah, the Exalted, observes quality meaning, one's sincerity, not quantity. Even a date fruit given sincerely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will earn a muslim reward greater in size than a mountain. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

Finally, one must remember that charity includes all good deeds that help others, not just wealth. So the one who does not possess wealth, should give charity in other ways, such as giving others their time, energy and emotional support. The least one can do is keep their verbal and physical harm away from others, as this is considered as giving charity to oneself. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

Charity - 9

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 603, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that everyone will stand under the shade of their charity on Judgment Day.

It is important to bear in mind this is an extremely vital blessing to obtain, as the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421. People struggle to handle the heat of a summer's day, how will they possibly handle the heat of Judgment Day without shade?

A muslim should therefore strive to give regular charity irrespective of its quantity as Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity, He judges actions based on quality, meaning, one's sincerity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465, advises that the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are the regular ones, even if they are small. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that He will reward actions even if they are the size of an atom. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verse 7:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it”

Therefore, this leaves muslims with no excuse in failing to regularly donate charity for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, hoping to gain a strong shade which protects them from the severe heat of a Great Day.

Finally, one must remember that charity includes all good deeds that help others, not just wealth. So the one who does not possess wealth, should give charity in other ways, such as giving others their time, energy and emotional support. The least one can do is keep their verbal and physical harm away from others, as this is considered as giving charity to oneself. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

Charity - 10

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1855, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some characteristics which will allow a muslim to enter Paradise in peace.

One of these characteristics is to feed others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This is a great deed which leads to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and a great reward. Chapter 76 Al Insan, verses 9-11:

"We feed you only for the face [i.e., approval] of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude. Indeed, We fear from our Lord a Day austere and distressful." So Allah will protect them from the evil of that Day and give them radiance and happiness."

In addition, the one who feeds others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be fed the fruits of Paradise on Judgment Day. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449. Finally, a muslim should strive to give all forms of charity regularly, according to their means, irrespective of its quantity, as Allah, the Exalted, judges quality meaning, one's intention. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Charity - 11

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2520, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics of a fortunate person.

One of these characteristics is spending one's excess wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Excess wealth is the wealth which remains after one fulfills their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. A muslim should save reasonably for the near future and then spend the rest in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as charity. They should not spend it on vain or sinful things or hoard it. Hoarding wealth in reality makes it useless, as this practice defies the very purpose of its creation. Wealth which circulates in society is beneficial to all whereas hoarding only widens the gap between the rich and the poor. And it in reality does not benefit its owner, as they failed to enjoy it during their life yet will be held accountable for it in the hereafter. A muslim should either avoid obtaining excess wealth or at least use it in the correct way. In addition, this advice applies to all of one's blessings, meaning, one must strive to use all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and avoid using them on vain or sinful things. Vain things only lead to wasting one's precious resources and it will be a great regret for them on Judgement Day, especially when they observe the reward given to those who utilized their blessings correctly. Finally, vain and sinful things only lead to stress and trouble in both worlds, as this causes one to forget Allah, the Exalted, as truly remembering Him involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Charity - 12

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who possesses the following characteristics.

One of these characteristics is spending wealth without being disobedient to Allah, the Exalted, and to aid the weak and needy. This includes any spending which derives real benefit in this world or the next. It includes spending on fulfilling one's needs and the needs of one's dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance. Spending in this way is in fact a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. This correct spending encompasses all of the worldly blessings one has been granted and involves using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Aiding the needy includes all types of aid and support, such as financial, emotional and physical help. The one who aids others in this way will obtain the support of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930. The one who gains this cannot fail, as the help of Allah, the Exalted, overcomes all things. One must always remain sincere in their deeds by only performing them in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This is proven when one does not hope for nor demand any gratitude from people. One should aid others just like they desire others to aid them.

Charity - 13

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some easy righteous deeds to perform.

The first righteous deed is to help someone in their specific trade, according to one's means. For example, a muslim can support someone in their profession by paying for their further education or any fees connected to their profession. Helping in this way is in fact a great way of supporting an entire family, as helping a person who earns to support their family is indirectly supporting the family, even though it is far cheaper and easier than actually supporting the entire family. In addition, the donor will continue to gain reward, even after their death, as long as the person is benefitting from the donor's support while working in their trade.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should help someone who does not have a profession. This can include advising them on the best thing to do in order to obtain lawful wealth, paying for their education or encouraging business owners to hire them. This includes anything which aids this type of person to obtain lawful provision so that they can fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This is an important good deed as the one who does not have a lawful occupation is more likely to seek wealth through unlawful means, such as crimes. Helping people to obtain a lawful profession therefore reduces crimes and poverty within society. This benefits everyone within the society.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, which all muslims are capable of doing, is keeping their harm away from others, as this is an act of charity to oneself, as it saves them from punishment. In fact, keeping one's verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others is the very definition of a true muslim and believer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. It includes treating others in the same way one desires others to treat them. Simply put, the one who leaves others in peace will be granted peace and reward. The muslim who adds to this behaviour by benefiting others, according to their means, even if it is only a good word of encouragement, will gain reward on top of reward, and this leads to success in both worlds. Finally, keeping one's harm away from others is important, as justice will be established on Judgement Day. The one who wronged others will be forced to hand over their good deeds to those who they wronged, and if necessary, they will take the sins of those they wronged. This may well cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Charity - 14

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1427, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave some advice relating to wealth.

The first thing is that the upper hand is better than the lower hand. This means that the one who strives to give their obligatory and voluntary charity, according to their means, is superior to the one who gives less and instead takes things, such as wealth, from others. This Hadith does not criticize the needy, as they are entitled to take from others to fulfill their needs. But it criticizes those who are capable of giving but withhold and those who do not need to take things from others yet, still ask and take them. A muslim should give according to their means, irrespective of its size, as Allah, the Exalted, observes quality meaning, one's sincerity, not quantity. Every atom's worth of good will be recorded and rewarded by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verse 7:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it.”

And muslims should only ask and take things from others if they really need them. Otherwise, they should abstain from asking too much, as this leads to one becoming dependent on other people and losing trust in Allah, the Exalted. One should use the resources they have been granted according to the teachings of Islam, such as their physical

strength, and rely on Allah, the Exalted, to fulfil their needs. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 6:

"And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allāh is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. All is in a clear register."

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim must first spend on their own necessities and the necessities of their dependents before donating charity. This is not only a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006, but it is also sinful to fail in striving in lawful ways to fulfill the needs of one's dependents, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2312.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the best charity is when one donates after fulfilling their needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance and without putting themselves into financial difficulty. Islam teaches muslims not to donate all their wealth but to donate regularly according to their means in a balanced way. Quality and consistency of deeds are more important than the quantity of deeds.

Charity - 15

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that the one who spends in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will be rewarded according to what they give. And he warned not to hoard otherwise Allah, the Exalted, will withhold His blessings.

It is important to note, that one must only obtain and spend lawful wealth, as any righteous deed which has a foundation in the unlawful will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of one's intention. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Just like the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention, similarly the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful.

In addition, this spending is not only through charity but includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This is in fact a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. A muslim should spend in a balanced way whereby they help others without becoming needy themselves. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 29:

“And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent.”

A muslim should donate regularly according to their means, even if it is a little, as Allah, the Exalted, observes one's quality meaning, their sincerity, not the quantity of a deed. Regularly donating a little is far better and more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than donating a larger amount once in a while. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465.

It is important to note, as mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, when one gives according to their means, Allah, the Exalted, will reward them according to His infinite status. But the one who holds back will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. If a muslim hoards their wealth, they will leave it behind for others to enjoy while they are held accountable for it. If they misuse their wealth it will become a curse and burden for them in this world and a punishment in the next.

Finally, this Hadith applies to all of the worldly blessings one has been granted, not just wealth. When one strives to use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they will find peace of mind, success and an increase in blessings, as they have shown gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favour]...”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

This makes it clear that a Muslim does not need to be wealthy in order to gain blessings, peace and success in both worlds. They only need to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how little these blessings are.

Charity - 16

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2866, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that giving charity during one's life time is 100 times better than giving it when they reach their deathbed.

This is important to understand as many muslims foolishly believe they can either hoard their wealth or spend it in ways pleasing to their own desires instead of in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and when they reach their death beds they will then donate large amounts of wealth. First of all, as warned in this Hadith, a muslim will lose most their reward behaving in this manner. This is because they have realized that they are departing from this world and their precious wealth has now become insignificant and useless to them, as they cannot take it with them. Giving something useless to Allah, the Exalted, is not the characteristic of a true muslim. In fact, it contradicts true belief and piety. Chapter 3 Alea Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love...”

A muslim should therefore be kind to themselves and spend in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which includes spending on their own necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. They should not wait for their last

moment, as this might come unexpectedly and spending at this time will not be so fruitful for them anyway.

Charity - 17

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against greed. This can lead one to withholding the obligatory charity and this only leads to destruction in both worlds. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 3 Alea Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection...”

If one's greed prevents them from donating voluntary charity it may not be unlawful but it is highly undesirable as this contradicts the characteristic of a true believer. Put simply, the stingy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Greed will encourage one to use their blessings, such as their time and wealth, in ways pleasing to themselves instead of recognising that the path to peace and success in both worlds is to use the blessings one has

been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the true Owner and Bestower of all blessings.

A greedy person only ever cares about their own rights and will therefore easily neglect the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. This only leads to stress and trouble in both worlds.

Charity - 18

In a long Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described some important deeds which muslims must strive to perform.

One of things mentioned is that charity extinguishes sins like water extinguishes fire. A similar Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 664, advises that charity extinguishes the anger of Allah, the Exalted, and protects a muslim from an evil death. An evil death is when a person dies after losing their faith meaning, as a non-muslim. There is no loss greater than this. This is possibly why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, that a stingy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from the people, far from Paradise and close to Hell.

Muslims should take note and strive to give as much charity as possible. As charity in Islam encompasses so many different physical actions, such as smiling at someone to make them feel safe, which is advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1956, no muslim can excuse themselves from giving charity abundantly. In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, observes the quality of a deed over its quantity, one must therefore persist on acts of charity, even if they are small. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, loves the deeds that are regular, even if they are small in size. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 271:

“If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you, and He will remove from you some of your misdeeds [thereby]...”

Charity - 19

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often claim that due to their busy lives they do not find time to perform voluntary righteous deeds or even gain further knowledge on Islam. In cases like this a Muslim should strive to donate as much charity as possible as this righteous deed does not take much time and it is a huge branch of faith. There are countless virtues of donating charity which have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, the generous person is close to Allah, the Exalted, close to people, close to Paradise and far from Hell. Whereas, the stingy person is close to Hell, far from Allah, the Exalted, far from people and far from Paradise. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

In addition, as long as a Muslim benefits others through their charity even if they are preoccupied with worldly things Allah, the Exalted, will continue helping them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. This help from Allah, the Exalted, will extend to every aspect of one's life and in both worlds. It is important to note this charity does not need to be a huge amount of wealth. One should strive to give regularly and according to their means even if it is small in amount as Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity but quality. In addition, these Hadiths and others do not declare that the charity has to be a great amount either.

To conclude, ideally a Muslim should make time in order to fulfil all the different branches of faith. But if they are too preoccupied with the material world they should at least fulfil this important branch with the

obligatory duties hoping through it Allah, the Exalted, will grant them salvation on the Last Day.

Charity - 20

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. When a Muslim truly believes that everything they possess belongs to Allah, the Exalted, then using the blessings they possess correctly, such as giving charity, through the grace of Allah, the Exalted, becomes easy. One who adopts this attitude realizes they are simply returning a loan that was given to them by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 254:

“O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you...”

This behaviour also protects one from destroying their good deed of charity through pride. Pride makes a person believe they are doing Allah, the Exalted, and the needy a favor by donating charity. But the same way one returns a bank loan without pride Muslims need to realize their charity is a way of repaying the loan given by Allah, the Exalted. In addition, the needy are doing the donor a favor by taking their charity. The needy are a means for them to obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted, and without them this would be impossible. If one believes that their wealth was accumulated through their intelligence and strength they must understand that these things were also given by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, this loan in the form of blessings such as wealth must be returned to Allah, the Exalted, otherwise they may face a penalty that will begin in this world and continue into the hereafter.

When one donates charity their transaction is not with a needy person in fact it is with Allah, the Exalted. When a person sincerely does business with Allah, the Exalted, they can be confident of an unimaginable profit which will benefit them in this world and in the next. This has been indicated in the main verses under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?...”

Provision - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands, it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does. In addition, this provision includes the minimum a person needs to survive in this world. Meaning, as long as they are alive, a person will continue to receive their provision and nothing can stop them from receiving and utilising it, not even themselves.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over. Instead, they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. A Muslim must avoid adopting an extreme mentality by either adopting laziness and relying on destiny to deliver their provision to them nor should they rely completely on their own efforts. The balance is to strive to earn lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and rely on the guarantee of Allah, the Exalted, as this reliance will prevent impatience and seeking wealth through unlawful means. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

Provision - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to cause one to give up using the means He has created, as this would make them useless, and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means, as a muslim should firmly believe their provision, which includes wealth, was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means, which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the

means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

Finally, understanding and acting on the main Hadith also encourages one to become independent of relying on others to provide for them, such as the government or relatives. Instead, one should use the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam while fully believing their allocated lawful provision will reach them. This will ensure they trust in Allah, the Exalted, alone.

Provision - 3

Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator and Allocator of provision to the entire creation which they need to preserve their physical and spiritual constitutions. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the provision of the entire creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The one who understands this divine name will rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has planned for them before they were created. They will prove this reliance by striving to gain lawful provision as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, while refraining from anything which is unlawful and doubtful.

It is important to note that as people require physical provision in the form of food and drink. Similarly, the soul of a muslim requires provision also. This provision strengthens it and leads it to eternal bliss. This provision is in the form of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The foundation of all this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Therefore, muslims should strive to gain this important provision of the soul as well as provision for their physical body. Two elements should be remembered in this respect. Do not exert unlawful and unnecessary efforts in gaining one's guaranteed provision. And do not misuse or waste the provision one gains.

A muslim, should act on this divine name by fulfilling their duty by providing for their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. This includes providing them with both physical and spiritual provision through education. A muslim should also do the same for the needy according to their capacity without fearing poverty for themselves. They should remember the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, which advises that Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil the needs of the muslim who takes care of the needs of others.

Provision - 4

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is infinitely bountiful and bestows favours and blessings without recompense or external cause. He gives generously without being asked.

The muslim who understands this divine name will always seek bounty and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, as they know the Bestower loves to be asked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3571. But it is important to note, the one who seeks bounty from the Bestower should know it is not gained through His disobedience. Any worldly blessings obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will only become a burden for its possessor in both worlds. A muslim should instead strive to obtain beneficial blessings from the Bestower by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. When a muslim truly understands that all blessings have been given by the Bestower they will show true gratitude to Him. This is when one uses all the blessings they possess according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

A muslim should act on this divine name by bestowing the blessings they have been given to others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted.

The one who gives to others will be given more than they could have ever imagined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”

Provision - 5

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. People often complain about getting mentally and physically exhausted when it comes to earning their lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and responsibilities, such as providing for their dependents. It is important to understand that as long as a person lives in this world, their provision, meaning, the things they need to survive in this world has been guaranteed by Allah, the Exalted. In fact, He allocated the provision for the creation over 50,000 years before He created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 6:

“And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. All is in a clear register.”

An aspect of this allotment includes the mental and physical energy needed to obtain one's provision. But the important thing to note is that the guaranteed provision is only the minimum required to survive in this world, there is no guarantee a person will get more than this minimum, even though most people do get more. This means, even though all people have been provided the mental and physical energy to obtain the minimum provision they need to survive in this world, they have not all been provided with more than that. Meaning, some people have been provided more than the minimal and therefore they have also been provided the mental and physical energy required to obtain it, whereas others have not. Therefore, when people strive to obtain more than their minimal requirements, which they were not allocated, then it will only result in getting mentally and physically fed up, as they were not

provided the extra mental and physical energy needed to obtain more provision. Whereas, the one who strives to obtain their necessities without waste, extravagance and excessiveness, will never get mentally or physically fed up, as this level of mental and physical energy has been guaranteed to them.

To conclude, if one wants to avoid mental and physical exhaustion in respect to obtaining their provision, they should strive to obtain and use according to their minimal requirements and teach their dependents to do the same.

Patience - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that real patience is shown at the onset of a difficulty.

First of all, patience is when one controls their words and actions so that they maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, whenever they encounter a difficulty.

It is important to understand that true patience is shown throughout a calamity meaning, from the very onset of the difficulty onwards. Accepting the reality of a difficulty, such as the death of a loved one, eventually, with the passing of time occurs with everyone. This is acceptance not true patience.

Muslims should therefore ensure they encounter difficulties while patience believing that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best for everyone involved, even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind the choices. Instead, they should reflect on the many times when they believed something was good yet, it ended up being bad and vice versa. Understanding the extreme short sightedness and limited knowledge of humans and the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, can aid a muslim to show patience from the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a soul with more than they can handle, it leaves no one with an excuse not to show patience and maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through words and actions, from the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."

In addition, it is important for muslims to continue showing patience till the end of their life. This is because a person can easily lose the reward of patience even if they were patient from the onset, by demonstrating impatience further down the line. This is an extremely deadly trap of the Devil. He patiently waits for decades just to ruin the reward of a muslim. The Holy Quran makes it clear that a muslim will gain reward for what they bring to Judgment Day, meaning, take with them when they die, it does not declare they will gain reward after simply doing a deed, such as showing patience at the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

“Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed...”

Patience - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in, whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation, as this is unavoidable. If a muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam, which is true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

It is important to note that success in every situation, in the main Hadith, has been indicated for the believer and not the Muslim. This is because a believer possesses stronger faith which is rooted in Islamic knowledge. As a result of their stronger faith, they adhere more strictly to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease. Whereas, the Muslim is someone who has accepted Islam but due to weak faith, which is caused by ignorance of Islamic knowledge, they may well fail to respond to different situations with the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is vital for one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they reach the rank of a believer and therefore maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, under all circumstances.

Patience - 3

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims not to question destiny as this opens the door to the Devil. He encourages muslims to challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as they do not observe the wisdoms behind it because of their short sightedness and lack of understanding. This in turn leads to impatience and the loss of reward. One should reflect on their past experiences where they believed something was good when it was in fact bad and vice versa in order to inspire them to remain patient, as they will be shown these benefits sooner or later. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Patience - 4

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6470, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever sincerely tries to be patient will be granted patience by Allah, the Exalted. He concluded that there is no gift greater than patience.

A muslim must force patience on themselves especially, during times of difficulty. The best way to achieve this is by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. For example, the one who knows Allah, the Exalted, will give an uncountable reward to the patient muslim is more likely to be patient than the one who is ignorant of this fact. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

It is important to note that real patience is shown at the onset of a situation, not later on. When one demonstrates patience later on, this is acceptance, which even the most impatient person experiences.

Finally, patience is important to adopt as it is required in each element of obeying Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling His commands,

refraining from His prohibitions and when facing destiny. Put simply, success in worldly or religious matters is not possible without patience. Therefore, it is a magnificent gift granted by Allah, the Exalted, to those who strive to adopt it.

Patience - 5

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 492, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim does not face any type of physical difficulty, irrespective of its size, such as a prick of a thorn, or any emotional difficulty, such as stress, except that Allah, the Exalted, erases their sins because of it.

This refers to minor sins, as major sins require sincere repentance. This outcome occurs when a muslim remains patient from the onset of the difficulty until the end of their life. This is important to understand, as many people believe they can complain initially and then show patience after. This is not true patience, instead it is only acceptance, which naturally occurs with the passing of time. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1870. In addition, patience needs to be shown throughout one's life, as a person can destroy their reward by showing impatience down the line.

A muslim should remember that it is far better to have their minor sins erased through these difficulties than to reach the Day of Judgment while still possessing them. A muslim should constantly repent and strive to perform righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. And if they encounter any physical or emotional difficulties, they should remain patient hoping for their minor sins to be erased and to obtain an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

The one who faces every difficulty with patience, which involves avoiding complaining or disobeying Allah, the Exalted, through speech or actions, and adds sincere repentance to their behaviour, will have both their minor and major sins erased. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and the people who have been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, sincerely promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and it includes, making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The one who faces difficulties in this manner and faces times of ease with gratitude, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will find peace and success in every situation they face in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Patience - 6

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3127, warns that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade people from wailing.

Unfortunately, some believe it is not permitted to cry in times of difficulty, such as losing a loved one. This is incorrect as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried on many occasions when someone passed away. For example, he wept when his son Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him, passed away. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126.

In fact, crying on someone's death is a sign of mercy which Allah, the Exalted, has placed in the hearts of His servants. And only those who show mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1284. This same Hadith clearly mentions that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried over his grandson who passed away.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2137, advises that a person will not be punished for crying over the death of someone or the grief they feel in their heart. But they may well face punishment if they utter words showing their impatience with the choice of Allah, the Exalted.

It is clear that feeling grief in one's heart or shedding tears is not prohibited in Islam. The things which are prohibited are wailing, showing one's impatience through words or actions, such as tearing one's clothes or shaving one's head in grief. There are severe warnings against those who act in this way. Therefore, one should avoid these actions at all costs. Not only may a person face punishment for acting in this way but if the deceased desired and commanded others to act like this when they passed away, they too will be held accountable. But if the deceased did not desire this then they are free of any accountability. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1006. It is common sense to understand that Allah, the Exalted, would not punish someone because of the actions of another when the former did not advise them to act in that manner. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 18:

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another...”

Patience - 7

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a specific wisdom why people face difficulties and the loss of blessings, such as health. Often when Muslims receive blessings especially, beyond their need, it distracts them from the hereafter and instead focuses their minds on this material world. So in this respect, the wisdom behind a difficulty is to refocus a Muslim's attention on what is truly important which is preparing for the hereafter. This is like a person who is so preoccupied with their phone that they cross a road without seeing an oncoming vehicle. Another person violently pulls them away from the oncoming car which causes them distress yet, saves their life. Even though being pulled violently causes distress and even pain but it is only done in order to refocus their attention on the life threatening danger namely, the oncoming car. Similarly, a Muslim faces emotional and physical difficulties in order to refocus their attention on more important things such as the hereafter. If a Muslim was left to only face times of ease without difficulties there is no doubt that they would become lost in enjoying the excess of this material world. This neglect in the long run would be disastrous for them. So they face a small difficulty in order to protect them from greater difficulties namely, the difficulties of the hereafter. Therefore, Muslims should remember this truth every time they face a difficulty so that they leave the difficulty refocused on more important things and act correctly over this blessing instead of demonstrating impatience and heedlessness to this vital benefit. This is in fact one of the biggest favours of Allah, the Exalted.

Patience - 8

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the great tests and difficulties the righteous predecessors faced during their lives and how they overcame them through patience and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. One of the ways of achieving this is by always comparing one's difficulty to harder and more severe difficulties. When one does this it will make their problem seem small and less significant. This change in focus can aid a Muslim to be patient and remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. This can be explained through a worldly example. A person suffering from a severe migraine can be effected in such a way that it seems to them that the world is collapsing around them. But if this same person was on a ship which is about to hit an iceberg and sink in the middle of a freezing ocean then their severe migraine will not seem like a big deal. In fact, they would probably not even be effected by it at all as their whole focus would become shifted to the imminent life threatening danger namely, the sinking ship. This is how a Muslim should behave during difficulties. When they encounter a difficulty they should realise it could have been much worse and try to shift they focus on greater difficulties they could have encountered. This can be achieved by observing others who are in more difficult situations than them. For example, a person who suffers from back pain can ponder over the person who is physically disabled. Or they could ponder over much greater difficulties such as death and Judgment Day. This comparison will reduce the significance of their difficulty and its effects, which in turn will aid them in remaining patient and steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

Patience - 9

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Parents often take away things or prevent their children from obtaining certain things such as unhealthy food in order to protect them. This behaviour often causes the child to become sad or angry as they are completely unaware of the wisdom behind the actions of their parent. This parental behaviour is something which is widely accepted in society and is rightfully believed to be a characteristic of a good and responsible parent. Similarly, in life people often lose or are prevented from obtaining certain worldly things by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must understand that the same way parents keep harmful things away from their children even though their children do not understand the reason behind their choice similarly Allah, the Exalted, acts in this manner according to His infinite wisdom and knowledge in order to protect His servants even if people do not understand the wisdom behind His choices. Therefore, every time a Muslim finds themselves in this situation they should reflect on this simple example, which no one would reject irrespective of their faith, so that they are inspired to remain patient and show gratitude for the divine protection Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. They should not act like an immature child by becoming angry and impatient as adults are meant to behave better than children. In fact, children are excused from behaving in such a manner as they lack knowledge and experience whereas adults should not lack this and will therefore be held accountable for their behaviour in both worlds.

Patience - 10

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Every day people lose their loved ones. It is an inevitable outcome. A Muslim can remember and act on many things which can aid them during this difficulty. One thing is to observe the situation in a positive way. Meaning, instead of being sad over what one has lost they should concentrate on the good things that they gained through the person who has departed, such as their good advice and guidance. When one reflects on this they will understand that it was better to know the person before losing them instead of not knowing them at all. It is similar to the statement, it is better to have loved and lost than not loved at all. Though in most cases, this statement is taken out of context and misused but when used in this way it is correct and helpful.

In addition, a Muslim who undoubtedly believes in the hereafter should always remember that people do not meet in this world only to leave each other. But instead they only leave this world in order to meet again in the next world. This attitude can aid one in remaining patient during such a difficulty. And it should inspire them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience so that they can reunite with their loved one in their final resting place in the gardens of refuge, forever.

Patience - 11

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on dealing with a severe calamity, such as the death of a loved one and the importance of moving on. It is important to understand that when a severe difficulty, such as the death of a loved one occurs, it is better to return to one's normal daily routine and life as quick as possible, instead of leaving everything in order to grieve for a prolonged time. Even though, Islam does not prohibit mourning for those who have passed away yet, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5339, that people should not mourn for more than three days with the exception of a wife for her deceased husband, which is extended to four months and ten days. One of the wisdoms behind this is that when one drops everything in order to mourn, it only gives them time to ponder over the difficulty excessively. This can cause one to become impatient and challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as they dedicated so much time going over and over the calamity in their minds. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, warns that replaying the calamity over in one's mind and thinking it could have been avoided, only opens the door to the Devil, which leads to impatience. Whereas, moving forward and returning to one's normal life, after the recommended three days, allows one to mourn but without falling into the difficulty too deeply. A normal routine distracts a person from their calamity and helps them to refocus on the bigger picture, which prevents them from becoming impatient. Muslims should therefore busy themselves in performing righteous deeds which attracts the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, or they should busy themselves in lawful worldly activities, like their job. And they should avoid dropping everything in order to mourn for days on end, as this often leads them to a dark place which becomes difficult to escape.

Patience - 12

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the important role of doctors and their impact on their patients. It is important for muslims to understand a simple thing which can aid them with patiently facing destiny and the difficulties it brings. A person happily takes a bitter medicine, which their doctor prescribes, fully trusting in their knowledge, experience and choice, all the while believing that their doctor knows what is best for them. This is true even though they are only human and prone to errors. Yet many muslims fail to place this same level of trust in Allah, the Exalted, even though His knowledge is infinite and His choices always the wisest. Muslims should try to accept destiny and the troubles it brings, just like they take the bitter medicine without complaining, knowing it is best for them. They should understand that the troubles and difficulties they face are best for them, even if they do not understand or observe the wisdoms in them, just like they do not understand the science behind the bitter medicine they happily take. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

“Say, “Nothing will ever befall us except what Allah has destined for us. He is our Protector.” So in Allah let the believers put their trust.”

Even though, in most cases, they will never understand the science behind the bitter medicine they take, a time will certainly come, whether in this world or in the hereafter, when the wisdom behind the bitter difficulties they faced will be revealed to them. So a muslim should anticipate this time patiently knowing all will be revealed shortly. Pondering deeply over this can increase one's patience when dealing with difficulties. Patience involves avoiding complaining verbally or

through one's actions and maintaining one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Patience - 13

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

“...Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”

It is important for muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alea Imran, verse 146:

“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy

Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

“We [i.e., Allah] said, “O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.”

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.

These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

Patience - 14

A Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, advises that being patient over the things one dislikes leads to a great reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

Patience is a key element required in order to fulfil the three aspects of faith: fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny. But a higher and more rewarding level than patience is contentment. This is when a muslim deeply believes that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants and they therefore prefer His choice over their own. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

A patient muslim understands that anything which effected them, such as a difficulty, could not have been avoided even if the entire creation aided them. Similarly, whatever missed them could not have affected them. The one who truly accepts this fact will not exult and grow proud

over anything they obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, allocated that thing to them. Nor will they grieve over anything which they fail to obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, did not allocate that thing to them and nothing in existence can alter this fact. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register¹ before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, that when something occurs a muslim should firmly believe it was decreed and nothing could have changed the outcome. And a muslim should not have regrets believing they could have prevented the outcome if they somehow behaved differently as this attitude only causes the Devil to encourage them towards impatience and complaining about destiny. A patient muslim truly understands that whatever Allah, the Exalted, has chosen is best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind it. The one who is patient does desire a change in their situation and even supplicates for it but they do not complain about what has occurred. Being persistently patient can lead a muslim to a greater level namely, contentment.

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This muslim firmly believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they

encounter a problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

It is important to know that Allah, the Exalted, tests those He loves. If they show patience they will be rewarded but if they are angered it only proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2396.

A muslim should be patient or content with the choice and decree of Allah, the Exalted, in both times of ease and hardship. This will reduce one's distress and provide them with much blessings in both worlds. Whereas, impatience will only destroy the reward they could have received. Either way a muslim will go through the situation decreed by Allah, the Exalted, but it is their choice whether they desire reward or not.

A muslim will never reach full contentment until their behaviour is equal in times of difficulty and ease. How can a true servant go to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, for a judgment and then become unhappy if the choice does not match their desire. There is a real possibility that if a person gets what they desire it will destroy them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

A muslim should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, when the divine decree matches their wishes they praise Allah, the Exalted. And when it does not they become annoyed acting as if they know better than Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

A muslim should behave with the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as if they would behave with a skilled trustworthy doctor. The same way a muslim would not complain taking bitter medicine prescribed by the doctor knowing it is best for them they should accept the difficulties they face in the world knowing it is best for them. In fact, a sensible person would thank the doctor for the bitter medicine and similarly an intelligent muslim would thank Allah, the Exalted, for any situation they encounter.

In addition, a muslim should review the many verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the reward given to the patient and content muslim. Deep reflection on this will inspire a muslim to remain steadfast when facing difficulties. For example, Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2402. It advises that when those who patiently faced trials and difficulties in the world receive their reward on Judgment Day those who did not face such trials will wish they patiently faced difficulties such as their skin being cut off with scissors.

In order to gain patience and even contentment with what Allah, the Exalted, chooses for a person they should seek and act on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they reach the high level of excellence of faith. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. Excellence in faith is when a muslim performs deeds, such as the prayer, as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will not feel the pain of difficulties and trials as they will completely be immersed in the awareness and love of Allah, the Exalted. This is similar to the state of the women who did not feel pain when cutting their own hands when they observed the beauty of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 31:

"...and gave each one of them a knife and said [to Joseph], "Come out before them." And when they saw him, they greatly admired him and cut their hands and said, "Perfect is Allah! This is not a man; this is none but a noble angel.""

If a muslim cannot reach this high level of faith they should at least try to reach the lower level mentioned in the Hadith quoted earlier. This is the level where one is constantly aware they are being observed by Allah, the Exalted. The same way a person would not complain in front of an authoritative figure they feared, such as an employer, a muslim who is constantly aware of the presence of Allah, the Exalted, will not complain about the choices He makes.

Patience - 15

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. When one observes the suffering of people around the world, especially Muslims who believe in Allah, the Exalted, they may question the lack of divine aid based on outward appearances. But it is important for a Muslim to make certain realities about Allah, the Exalted, clear in their mind, as this aids in sincerely obeying Him, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One of these realities is that divine help does not occur according to the way people often expect or desire. A person's perception and thinking is extremely limited, whereas the divine perception and knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite. He therefore decrees things, such as His help for those being oppressed, according to His plan and method, which takes into consideration things which are beyond human perception and understanding, to ensure the best thing occurs for the people involved. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

This is similar to how a doctor may prescribe a bitter medicine, which outwardly seems to not help the sick patient yet in the long run it favors them, as in it lies their cure.

There are many examples of the divine aid of Allah, the Exalted, which in the short term, seemed absent yet in the long term and taking into consideration the bigger picture, was more beneficial than anyone could have comprehended. For example, the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was thrown into a desolate well and abandoned by his brothers, while he was only a child. He was then sold into slavery and then unjustly imprisoned. Any person observing what occurred to him would believe that the help of Allah, the Exalted, was completely absent from him. Yet, in the long run these events ensured that the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, would become the finance minister of Egypt which allowed him to prevent the deaths of millions, through a great famine which occurred in his time. So in reality, the help of Allah, the Exalted, was never absent from him or the general population at all. Instead, the divine aid occurred in a way which was beyond human understanding and resulted in the best outcome for everyone involved. Therefore, the help of Allah, the Exalted, does not often come in a way which is obvious nor according to the desires and expectations of people, as this would not result in the best outcome for those involved.

In conclusion, it is important to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so certain realities in respect to Allah, the Exalted, can be learned and understood. This in turn will strengthen one's belief and their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 214:

"...Unquestionably, the help of Allāh is near."

Patience - 16

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 29-30.

It is clear that the main reason why the Muslims suffered so many losses was the misjudgment of the archers. They unintentionally disobeyed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they believed the war was over and his command no longer applied. This indicates that as long as a Muslim sincerely obeys the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will be granted success but if they disobey him, this support will be withdrawn. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“Whoever obeys the Messenger has truly obeyed Allah...”

and chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.””

And chapter 24 An Nur, verse 63:

“Do not make [your] calling of the Messenger among yourselves as the call of one of you to another. Already Allāh knows those of you who slip away, concealed by others. So let those beware who dissent from his [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] order, lest disaster strike them or a painful punishment.”

In addition, it is customary for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, to sometimes gain the upper hand over their enemies and on some occasions their enemies gain the upper hand, even though the ultimate victory is always in favour of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The reason for this alternating of circumstances is to separate the true believers from the hypocrites and the opportunists, who always join the successful group in order to reap worldly benefits. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, always won, then the hypocrites and opportunists

would become inextinguishable from the sincere believers. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, always lost, then this would hinder their mission. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 140:

“If a wound should touch you - there has already touched the [opposing] people a wound similar to it. And these days [of varying conditions] We alternate among the people so that Allāh may make evident those who believe and [may] take to Himself from among you martyrs...”

Another reason for this alternating of victory and defeat is to teach the believers how to adopt both patience and gratitude. If they lost all the time, then they may well become patient but would find it difficult to be grateful. If they won all the time, then they may well adopt gratitude but will struggle to adopt real patience. The alternating of situations allows for them to adopt both patience and gratitude, two halves which are vital to obtain success in both worlds.

Gratitude - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in, whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation, as this is unavoidable. If a muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam, which is true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

It is important to note that success in every situation, in the main Hadith, has been indicated for the believer and not the Muslim. This is because a believer possesses stronger faith which is rooted in Islamic knowledge. As a result of their stronger faith, they adhere more strictly to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease. Whereas, the Muslim is someone who has accepted Islam but due to weak faith, which is caused by ignorance of Islamic knowledge, they may well fail to respond to different situations with the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is vital for one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they reach the rank of a believer and therefore maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, under all circumstances.

Gratitude - 2

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less, showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others, such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands, as He is the source of the blessing and they must show gratitude to the person who helped them, as they are the means which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness, according to their means, even if it is only a supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The one who does not show gratitude to the outward manifestation of the help of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, a person, will less likely show it directly to Allah, the Exalted.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

If a muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

Gratitude - 3

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4142, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to observe those who possess less worldly things than them instead of those who possess more, as this will prevent them from becoming ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some incorrectly observe the lives of others, which appear to be better than their own life. For example, normal people often observe celebrities and mistakenly believe their life is better. In most cases, this concept is not true, as people who appear to be in a better situation may well be facing difficulties which would make others not wish to trade places with them. An outsider will only observe things from one shallow point of view. But if they could see the whole story they would realise everyone faces problems and no one has the perfect life irrespective of what they own or how famous they are. Often this misconception is caused by the media. But people fail to remember that the aim of the media is to paint a certain picture of the lives of celebrities which look appealing to read about. In most cases, if they only reported facts without sugar coating them, the majority of their customers would turn away from them.

Muslims must avoid this false belief as it is a tool of the Devil who uses it to inspire people to become ungrateful over what they possess. The correct mind-set, which has been advised in this Hadith, will prevent one becoming ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted. Whenever a muslim feels ungrateful they should shift their focus to the countless people who are living in severe poverty and facing much greater hardships than them.

This will encourage them to be grateful to Allah, the Exalted, for what He has granted them. This gratitude is practically shown by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will lead to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

The grass is not greener on the other side of the fence, it is in fact green enough on one's own side. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

But in respect to one's religion, they should always observe those who are more dedicated to Islam than them. This attitude will prevent one from adopting laziness when they observe those who are less dedicated to Islam than them. Observing others who are less dedicated to Islam can even encourage one to justify and belittle their sins, which is a dangerous path to adopt. Observing those who are more dedicated to Islam will also encourage one to strive harder in their dedication to Islam in order to fulfil their potential. The root of this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Gratitude - 4

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the Corona Virus and the physical restrictions associated with it, such as not leaving one's house unnecessarily.

It is important for muslims to realize the countless blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, as this realization will inspire them with true gratitude, which is to use each blessing they possess correctly, according to teachings of Islam. Muslims often fail to acknowledge these blessings, such as having the freedom to leave one's house whenever they wish.

In addition, this true gratitude is extremely important as the Holy Quran warns that those who changed in a negative way, such as failing to show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, were tested with difficulties by the removal of these blessings. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

"...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves..."

For example, it is obvious to anyone who observes most Mosques during the obligatory congregational prayers that the vast majority of local muslims do not attend them. Attending the Mosques is the very

essence of showing gratitude for being granted a Mosque by Allah, the Exalted. But as many muslims failed to show this true gratitude, Allah, the Exalted, changed the situation by closing them through this virus outbreak.

Muslims should therefore regularly assess the blessings they possess so that they show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using them according to His pleasure and commands. This will cause things to change in a positive way and increase the blessings they are granted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

In addition, these social restrictions should also remind muslims to make use of the blessings they possess, which normally pass away with time, such as good health and time. The one who utilizes their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as their good health, will find that they receive the same support and reward from Allah, the Exalted, even when they eventually lose this blessing. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who fail to utilize their blessings correctly will lose out on gaining reward while they possess them and when they eventually lose them. This is a manifest loss.

Gratitude - 5

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, Muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

Truthfulness - 1

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise. When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The proof of one's sincerity is when they do not desire nor hope for the gratitude of others.

The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a muslim discusses something which does not concern them. This also includes avoiding vain speech, as it often leads to sinful speech and is a waste of one's precious time, which will be a regret for them on Judgement Day. One can adopt this level of truthfulness by simply saying something good or remaining silent.

The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to the hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions. The one who behaves in this manner will use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. According to the three levels discussed earlier, lying in one's intention involves being insincere to Allah, the Exalted, and performing good deeds for the sake of people. Lying in speech involves all types of sinful speech. Lying in actions includes persisting on sins, which involves violating the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. The one who encompasses all these levels of lying is a great liar and it does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to the person on Judgement Day who is recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Truthfulness - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that lying is an aspect of hypocrisy. Lying is unacceptable whether it is a small lie, which is often called a white lie, or when one lies as a joke. All of these types of lying are forbidden. In fact, the one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive someone, has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315.

Another popular lie people often speak believing it is not a sin is when they lie to children. This is undoubtedly a sin according to Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4991. It is plain foolishness to lie to children as they will only adopt this sinful habit from the elder who lies to them. Behaving in this manner shows children lying is acceptable when it is not acceptable according to the teachings of Islam. Only in very rare and extreme cases is lying acceptable for example, lying in order to protect the life of an innocent person.

It is vital to avoid lying as according to one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, it leads to other sins, such as backbiting and mocking people. This behaviour leads one to the gates of Hell. When a person continues to lie they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar. It does not take a scholar to predict what will happen to a person on Judgment day who has been recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar.

All muslims desire the company of the Angels. Yet, when a person lies they are deprived of their company. In fact, the stench that is omitted from the mouth of a liar causes the Angels to move a mile away from them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1972.

The one who persists in lying will find that it infects their intention meaning, they begin to perform good deeds for other than to please Allah, the Exalted. This leads to a loss in reward in both worlds. In addition, it will also corrupt their actions, as physical sins become easier to do when one's tongue is addicted to lying.

Chastity - 1

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6806, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned seven groups of people who will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

This shade will protect them from the horrors of the Day of Judgment which includes the unbearable heat caused by the Sun being brought within two miles of the creation. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421.

One of these groups includes a person who is invited towards fornication but rejects it out of the fear of Allah, the Exalted. Controlling one's desire especially when no one except Allah, the Exalted, will know about it is a great deed. Muslims should strive to avoid situations where they might be invited to sins by firstly avoiding places where sins are more common, such as a nightclub. This is extremely important as a person's environment often has a deep impact on their attitude and behaviour. Just like a student is more likely to study in a quiet library compared to a busy and loud house a muslim is less likely to be attracted to sins when they avoid places where sins occur regularly and openly. The other important thing is to avoid people who openly commit sins and invite others to them. A person will adopt the characteristics of their companions whether good or bad. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. Muslims should not only ensure they accompany good people but also encourage their dependents, such as their children, to do the same. If muslims truly

concentrated on this it will dramatically reduce the amount of youth who become involved in gangs and crime. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

Chastity - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6474, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, guaranteed Paradise to the person who safeguards their mouth and chastity.

The second aspect of the main Hadith under discussion advises muslims to safeguard their chastity meaning, avoid unlawful relationships. A muslim has been given a way to achieving this namely, marriage. If a muslim is not in the right position to get married, such as financially, then they should fast often as this reduces carnal desires. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1905.

Finally, as these two aspects combined lead to Paradise it is therefore the reason why getting married has been labeled completing half of one's faith in a Hadith found in Al Mu'jam Al Awsat, number 992.

Chastity – 3

This is linked to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 68:

“...and do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. And whoever should do that will meet a penalty.”

The true servants of Allah, the Exalted, avoid all forms of illegal relationships. The fact that adultery has been placed next to polytheism and killing an innocent person in this verse indicates its severity.

Muslims should take precautions in order to avoid being tempted into illegal relationships. Firstly, they should learn to lower their gaze. This does not mean one should always stare at their shoes but it means they should avoid looking around unnecessary especially in public places. They should avoid staring at others and maintain respect for the opposite gender. Just like a muslim would not like someone staring at their sister or daughter they should not stare at other people's sisters and daughters. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 30:

“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them...”

Whenever possible a muslim should avoid spending time alone with the opposite gender unless they are related in a way which prohibits marriage. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1862.

Muslims should dress and behave with modesty. Dressing modestly avoids attracting the glances of strangers and behaving modestly prevents one from taking the initial steps which could lead to an illegal relationship such as talking unnecessarily to the opposite gender.

Understanding the blessings of avoiding illegal relationships is another way to protect oneself from them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed Paradise to the one who safeguards their tongue and chastity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2408.

Fearing the punishment of being involved in illegal relationships will also aid a muslim to avoid them. For example, faith will depart from the person who is committing fornication. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4690.

In reality, a muslim does not need illegal relationships as Islam prescribes marriage. Those who cannot afford to marry should fast often

as this also helps to control one's desires and actions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3398.

Chastity - 4

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Allah, the Exalted, encourages marriage and forbids illegal relationships. When a couple are not truly devoted to each other, like a married couple, then any real difficulties they face will lead to more emotional stress for the couple, as they fail to support each other correctly. Coming in and out of multiple relationships over one's life undoubtedly has a detrimental affect on their mental health. It is no surprise that those who separate from their boyfriends/girlfriends often end up in counselling. They end up suffering from mental disorders, such as depression, more than those who avoid these relationships. In casual relationships, the couple are often not on the same wavelength. Meaning, one of the two always takes the relationship more seriously, such as desiring to settle down with their boyfriend/girlfriend, whereas the other does not feel the same. When this difference in attitude eventually boils to the surface it often leads to long standing emotional trauma to the one who took the relationship more seriously. Whereas, a married couple from the very first step are on the same wavelength, in respect to their long-term commitment to one another. A married couple are devoted to each other in every situation, whether they face situations which are planned or unplanned, such as having children. This attitude is very rarely found amongst normal couples. Having a relationship with another also fools a person into believing they completely know their partner and so if they do get married they often complain about their spouse changing after marriage. In most cases, they did not change. The things that changed were the responsibilities and pressures of their relationship. This issue often leads to marriage issues for those couples who were in a relationship prior to their marriage. Even if they live together prior to marriage, even then the same issue will occur. In addition, it is no secret that whenever one faces trouble with their boyfriend/girlfriend how severely it affects every other aspect of their life. For example, many young people drop out of college/universities simply because they cannot face seeing their ex-partner there every day. As marriage is a deep connection and

commitment between two people, they are less likely to breakup over the same petty issues normal couples breakup over.

In addition, any children that are born unintentionally from the relationship will put further stress on their relationship, which often results in them splitting up, as they do not desire to share the responsibility of raising a child. This creates a broken home for the child to grow up in where they do not have the support and supervision of both parents, which often leads to trouble for everyone. It is a clear fact that the majority of youth involved in crimes and gangs and those children who are groomed by sexual predators, come from broken families. Raising a child correctly when one desires a child is extremely hard, then can one imagine the emotional stress of raising a child correctly when the parent did not desire to have the child in the first place? This negatively effects the upbringing of the child and often leads to the problems mentioned earlier. This stress often leads to the single parent giving up the child for fostering or adoption, which in the majority of cases, has a detrimental negative and long term impact on the child, some of which were mentioned earlier. This further increases the chances of the child becoming misguided.

Allah, the Exalted, removed these numerous branch problems by addressing the root problem meaning, forbidding illegal relationships and encouraging marriage, whereby a couple sincerely devote themselves to each other and their children.

By addressing the concept of marriage, divorce and children in the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to a successful society. When the members of the family, whether together or divorced, fulfill

each other's rights and create a stable and happy home for the children it causes a positive ripple effect throughout society. Similarly, when a family is unhappy and fail to fulfil each other's rights then this causes a negative ripple effect to spread throughout society.

Many thinkers have come and gone which have addressed the issues people and society face but as these solutions target branch issues the benefit of these solutions are minimal. Whereas, Allah, the Exalted, through this method of addressing root issues, which affect an individual and the society, has clarified all things so that people can achieve success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 89:

“...And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy...”

Trusting in Allah (SWT) - 1

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2344, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if people truly trusted Allah, the Exalted, He would provide for them just like He provides for birds. They leave their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening satisfied.

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”

The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A muslim understands that the source of giving, withholding, harming or benefiting is none other than Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim truly believes that everything that occurs within their life, which Allah, the Exalted, alone decides, is best for everyone involved, even if this is not obvious to them and others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

It is important to note, that truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, does not mean one should abandon using the means which Allah, the Exalted, has provided, such as medicine. As the main Hadith under discussion clearly mentions that the birds leave their nests actively searching for provision. When one uses the strength and means provided by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam, they are undoubtedly obeying and relying on Him. This is in fact, the outward element of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

“O you who have believed, take your precaution...”

In reality, the outward activity is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and trusting Allah, the Exalted, inwardly is the inward state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should not abandon the outward tradition even if they possess the inward state of trust.

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands muslims to do so that they can obtain peace and

success in both worlds. Abandoning these actions while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant one peace and success is simply wishful thinking and has no value in Islam.

The second type of actions are those means which Allah, the Exalted, has created in this world in order for people to live in it safely, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty and wearing warm clothes in cold weather. A person who abandons these and causes harm to themselves is blameworthy. However, there are some people who have been provided special strength by Allah, the Exalted, so that they can avoid these means without harming themselves. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to fast for days on end uninterrupted but forbade others from doing the same, as Allah, the Exalted, provided for him directly without the need for food. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1922. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would not feel excess cold or heat. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 117. Therefore, if a person turns away from these means but is provided with the strength to endure without failing in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people, then it is acceptable otherwise it is blameworthy.

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was

over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith, might not seek provision actively, knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision, such as obtaining it through a job, is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents, even though they may be on this high rank.

Though it is important to note that using the means one has been granted, according to the teachings of Islam, is far better than abandoning them, as nothing is superior to the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for one, they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change, as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

To conclude, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted according to the teachings of Islam, firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person involved, whether they observe and realise this or not.

Trusting in Allah (SWT) - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5705, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that 70,000 muslims will enter Paradise without reckoning and described their characteristics.

The first characteristic is that they do not treat themselves with spiritual incantations. This is when one recites words connected to the Holy Quran or the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and blows over themselves or others in order to treat a sickness or problem. This method is completely lawful according to many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5741. The unlawful type is when one uses satanic words. Even though, lawful incantations are permissible unfortunately, some muslims become so engrossed and attached to them that they depend and trust more in them than they trust in Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, they almost behave as if they will only become cured if they do an incantation, as if the power to heal lies in it. This belief contradicts true trust in Allah, the Exalted, as in reality, the source of everything is Allah, the Exalted, alone. He only chooses to cure some people through means, such as conventional medicine or incantations. A muslim should never rely so much on incantations, believing without them a successful outcome is not possible. This is similar to the one who recites spiritual exercises believing if they fail to do so they will not be protected from illness and misfortune or they believe they can somehow change one's destiny, which is completely untrue. Allah, the Exalted, protects people and He can do so with or without spiritual exercises. Meaning, He is not dependent on anything to achieve something. One must instead sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the means He has provided them, such as medicine, according to Islamic teachings and rely on Allah, the Exalted, to choose the best outcome for them in every

situation. No other has any control in deciding what occurs and should therefore not be feared. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

"Say, "Never will we be struck except by what Allāh has decreed for us; He is our protector." And upon Allāh let the believers rely."

In addition, engrossing oneself in spiritual incantations often leads to a worse illness than they originally feared namely, paranoia. Paranoia causes one to think negatively about Allah, the Exalted, and people. This only leads to weakness of faith and damaging one's relationships with others.

In addition, the primary goal of Islamic teachings is the practical obedience of Allah, the Exalted, not performing incantations. A muslim can use lawful incantations but it is best to understand that the source of help is Allah, the Exalted, and nothing can prevent His help nor aid them if He decides something else for them.

Another issue with depending too much on spiritual exercises, such as incantations, is that when these people face difficulties instead of firstly observing themselves and their behaviour to see if they need to change it for the better and to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, patiently waiting for relief, they turn to uneducated and inexperienced people who claim to fix worldly things through spiritual exercises. As indicated earlier, these people only cause a muslim to adopt an illness which is far worse than their initial problem namely, paranoia. They convince muslims that their problems have either been

caused by supernatural creatures, such as jinns or by black magic which someone has used against them. Even though jinns do exist, it is very rare for them to affect people in their worldly matters. This causes muslims to become severely paranoid and superstitious over petty things and it even causes them to grow suspicious over their friends and relatives. This only leads to enmity and fractured relationships. It is important for muslims to strengthen their faith through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will prevent them from turning to such foolish people who cannot even fix their own problems, let alone fix the problems of others. Strong faith will prevent paranoia affecting them as they will rely fully on Allah, the Exalted. Strong faith makes a muslim understand that even if the entire creation desired to harm them they will not be able to do so unless Allah, the Exalted, allowed it. Similarly, the entire creation could not benefit them unless Allah, the Exalted, willed it. And every case and situation only occurs according to a set and unchangeable plan namely, destiny. This has been advised throughout Islamic teachings, such as the far reaching Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516.

Finally, engrossing oneself in spiritual exercises not rooted in Islamic teachings also encourages one to treat the treasury of Allah, the Exalted, like a shop where one buys worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, in exchange for some spiritual exercises. This is a highly disrespectful and insincere attitude to adopt, as the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are not credit cards which can be used to purchase worldly things, such as a child or a visa. One must instead know their place and behave as a sincere slave of Allah, the Exalted, and not act as a customer. They should sincerely obey Him by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him. One is allowed to ask for lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, in a way endorsed by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but must avoid other ways, as it leads to misusing the two sources of guidance and adopting a customer type attitude towards Allah, the Exalted.

To conclude, a muslim should fulfill the primary goal of Islamic teachings by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and then rely on Allah, the Exalted, to aid them in all situations.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that these muslims do not believe or are influenced by omens.

A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 909, warns against paying attention to bad omens, as behaving in this manner is like associating something to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, polytheism.

Paying attention to evil omens means that it affects one's behaviour and actions. Even though black magic and the evil eye are real, it is important to understand that nothing in the universe from the fluttering of a leaf to the Sun rising occurs without the choice and will of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim should remain steadfast by not bothering with evil omens or fearing witches and wizards as they cannot cause something which Allah, the Exalted, has not willed from occurring. Instead, one should remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, and continue with their lawful actions and choices and only seek protection from evil things according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while fully trusting in the support and overpowering choice and decree of Allah, the Exalted.

Trusting in Allah (SWT) - 3

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to firmly believe that they will not intensely miss anything they give up for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, whether the thing is unlawful or lawful but unnecessary. One should not fall for the whisperings of the Devil by believing otherwise as he has made it his mission to misguide people. For example, whenever a Muslim is inspired to donate charity the Devil quickly warns and frightens them with poverty which in many cases causes a Muslim to change their mind even though they fully believe they will not become poor donating some of their wealth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 268:

“Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality, while Allah promises you forgiveness from Him and bounty. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.”

A Muslim should act on the other half of this verse and instead trust that Allah, the Exalted, will replace the thing they give up for His sake with something much better. Those who have experienced this know the truth of this statement but those who have not must review history and observe how those who gave things up for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, succeeded in both worlds. For example, the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, namely, Imam Hasan Bin Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, gave up authority in order to save the lives of countless people for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. His action had in fact been prophesied in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3629. In exchange Allah, the Exalted, granted him blessings and reward far beyond any position of authority could give

him. For example, he has been declared the leader of the youth of Paradise in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3768. It is as if he gave up leadership in this world and was granted a greater authority in the next world.

As long as a Muslim is sincere in their action Allah, the Exalted, will replace what they give up for His sake with something much better. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?...”

Trusting in Allah (SWT) - 4

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is strange how some Muslims have adopted an attitude whereby they use reliance on Allah, the Exalted, as an excuse to be lazy on those matters which contradict their desires. For example, when these Muslims are told to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they correctly obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, they boldly reply that Allah, the Exalted, is All Merciful and All Forgiving so they hope He will forgive them even if they do not strive in His obedience. Even though Allah, the Exalted, is All Merciful and All Forgiving He has set a system in this universe which requires one to act if they desire to achieve success.

In addition, if they are so certain on the divine attributes of mercy and forgiveness why do they fail to show the same level of reliance on His divine attribute of being the Provider? Meaning, the One who has allocated the provision to the entire creation over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Why do they not relax at home without claiming benefits or earning through a job in order to obtain their provision and simply rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them the same way they rely on His forgiveness without striving for it? This cherry picking attitude proves their laziness and real incorrect intention. They do not rely on Allah, the Exalted, at all. This attitude must change before one's time comes so that they instead actively obey Allah, the Exalted, and rely internally on His forgiveness and mercy. Only then will a Muslim achieve true success in both worlds.

Trusting in Allah (SWT) - 5

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a common problem found amongst Muslims. When some face difficulties instead of firstly observing themselves and their behaviour to assess whether they need to change for the better and remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, patiently waiting for relief they instead turn to uneducated and inexperienced people who claim to fix worldly things through spiritual means. These people only cause a Muslim to adopt an illness which is far worse than their initial problem namely, paranoia. These people convince Muslims that their problems have either been caused by supernatural creatures, such as jinns, or by black magic which someone has used against them. Even though jinns do exist it is very rare for them to affect people in their worldly matters. This incorrect advice causes Muslims to become severely paranoid and superstitious over petty things and it even causes them to grow suspicious over their friends and relatives. This only leads to enmity and fractured relationships. This attitude will also damage one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, as they will be advised in many cases to do things which are not advised in the Holy Quran or the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for Muslims to strengthen their faith through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will prevent them turning to such foolish people who cannot even fix their own problems let alone fix the problems of others. Strong faith will prevent paranoia affecting them as they will fully rely on Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. Strong faith allows a Muslim to understand that even if the entire creation desired to harm them they will not be able to do so unless Allah, the Exalted, allowed it. Similarly, the entire creation cannot benefit them unless Allah, the Exalted, wills it. And every case and situation only occurs according

to a set and unchangeable plan namely, destiny. This has been advised throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the far reaching Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516.

To conclude, a Muslim when encountering a problem should firstly assess their own behaviour and rectify it if necessary and then remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and avoid further problems in the form of paranoia by avoiding people who claim to fix worldly problems in spiritual ways.

Trusting in Allah (SWT) - 6

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often question how they can build up and strengthen their trust in Allah, the Exalted, especially during difficulties. One of the main ways of doing this is through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is because the one who is disobedient to Allah, the Exalted, will always believe Allah, the Exalted, will not help them which in turn weakens their trust in Him. Whereas, the obedient Muslim will firmly believe that as they have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will definitely respond to them in their moment of need which in turn strengthens their trust in Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, advises that Allah, the Exalted, responds to a person according to their perception of Him. The disobedient person will always have negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their disobedience. Whereas, an obedient Muslim will always have positive thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, because of their obedience. This thinking can weaken or strengthen a Muslim's trust in Allah, the Exalted. The obedient Muslim trusts that if they fulfilled their side of a business contract their business partner would do the same. Similarly, an obedient Muslim trusts that as they through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, have fulfilled their duties Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil His promises by aiding them throughout their life especially, through difficulties. Whereas, the one who does not fulfil their side of a business contract would not trust or hope that their business partner will fulfil their side. Similarly, a disobedient person would not trust that Allah, the Exalted, would aid them as they failed to fulfil their duties.

To conclude, having and building trust in Allah, the Exalted, is directly linked to His obedience. The more one is obedient the more they will trust in Him. The less they are obedient they less they will trust in Him.

Trusting in Allah (SWT) - 7

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the Corona Virus and how fast it is spreading across the world. It is important for muslims to understand that Islam teaches muslims to achieve true trust in Allah, the Exalted, by utilizing the means He has created in a balanced way and then trust that the outcome Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best for them. In the case of the Corona Virus, muslims should take reasonable precautions, such as good hygiene, without going overboard, such as wearing a hazmat suit in public. But they should trust and understand a fact namely, only the things which Allah, the Exalted, decrees can affect them. Meaning, if Allah, the Exalted, wills some benefit for someone, the entire creation put together cannot prevent them from gaining it. And if Allah, the Exalted, desires to afflict someone with something, such as an illness, the entire creation put together cannot save them from it. This has been made clear in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 17:

“And if Allah should touch you with adversity, there is no remover of it except Him. And if He touches you with good - then He is over all things competent.”

Islam teaches a balanced approach whereby one takes reasonable precautions which Allah, the Exalted, has created and provided them with but trusts that what Allah, the Exalted, has decreed is inevitable and best for them, even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind it. This attitude and belief prevents paranoia and stress. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

In addition, the rapid spread of this virus should encourage muslims to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, and strive in His obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And they should especially fulfil their duty of kindly commanding good and forbidding evil according to their knowledge. This is because the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, that when immorality becomes widespread and public, people will be afflicted with new diseases which never occurred before them.

Trusting in Allah (SWT) - 8

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the different aspects of the universe, such as the Sun, planets and other things. At one point in history Earth seemed to be the only significant thing in the universe. But with the passing of time and scientific advancements, it was discovered that Earth is in fact only a drop in a vast ocean namely, the universe. It is important for muslims to understand these scientific teachings as it inspires one to adopt good characteristics, such as trust in the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. When a muslim faces difficulties and questions the help of Allah, the Exalted, they should ponder over the size of the universe and how many creatures exist in it. The Earth is a single planet in a solar system which is made up of many planets and a star. Many solar systems make up a galaxy. Many galaxies make up the universe. A muslim firmly believes that all these things were created and are sustained by Allah, the Exalted, without any partner or help. When a muslim reflects on this deeply, they should realise that if Allah, the Exalted, can sustain the entire universe without anything being deprived or falling out of sync, He can also take care of their issues and difficulties.

Provision is something people often stress about and in some cases, this stress even drives them to seek provision from unlawful sources. Whenever a muslim faces this stress, they should reflect on the universe and on the countless creations which Allah, the Exalted, provides continuous provision for. If He does this, why should one suspect He will not provide provision for a person who only needs a few things to sustain themselves? Taking a step back when facing difficulties and assessing these facts is an excellent way to remove stress and strengthen one's trust in Allah, the Exalted.

Teachings are found in the Holy Quran and in the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the promise of Allah, the Exalted, to provide continuous provision to the creation. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 60:

“And how many a creature carries not its [own] provision. Allah provides for it and for you...”

But the truth of these teachings is also found in the creation, such as the universe. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 190:

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding.”

Therefore, it is important for muslims to firstly learn and act on the teachings of the divine scriptures and then reflect on the creation. This will lead to the strengthening of one's faith, which includes the strengthening of one's trust in Allah, the Exalted.

Trusting in Allah (SWT) - 9

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, they are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But they are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

“Say, "Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us...”

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort

of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

“Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter...”

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”

Repentance - 1

A divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3540, advises the importance and vastness of the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. The first part of the Hadith declares that as long as a muslim sincerely supplicates to Allah, the Exalted, and hope's in His mercy they will be forgiven by Him.

This response has in fact been guaranteed for all lawful supplications in the Holy Quran, not just for the supplication of forgiveness. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

"And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you."..."

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned this verse and declared that supplication is an act of worship meaning, a righteous deed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1479. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, advises that every supplication is accepted in different ways as long as it is a lawful one. The person is either granted what they requested or a reward will be reserved for them in the hereafter or they will be forgiven an equivalent sin. But it is important to note, that in order to receive a positive response a muslim must fulfil the conditions and the etiquettes of the supplication. In respect to supplicating for forgiveness, this includes actively striving to avoid sins and sincerely obeying Allah,

the Exalted, as it contradicts common sense to ask for forgiveness while persisting on sins.

One of the greatest supplications a muslim can make is for forgiveness, as it is a means for one obtaining blessings, avoiding difficulties in this world and a means to obtaining Paradise and escaping Hell in the next world. Chapter 71 Nuh, verses 10-12:

“And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.’”

As indicated by the main Hadith under discussion having hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, when supplicating is a condition for forgiveness. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, acts according to His servant's opinion of Him, which has been confirmed in a divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

One of the greatest causes of forgiveness is when a muslim only hopes in Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them, full well knowing no one can forgive them or protect them from punishment except Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that no matter how many sins a person commits the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is greater. In fact, it is unlimited, therefore a person's limited sins will never be able to overcome it. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to magnify what they supplicate for, as nothing is too great for Allah, the Exalted, to grant. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6812. But it is important to note that using the fact that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite as an excuse to persist in sins, is only mocking this important truth and the one who behaves in such a manner may be deprived of His forgiveness.

The next part of the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of sincerely seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in many verses and other Hadiths. This act of seeking forgiveness is a part of sincere repentance. It can be understood that seeking forgiveness is an act of the tongue while the rest of sincere repentance involves turning away from the sin through actions. Sincere repentance also includes feeling genuine remorse, making a firm promise not to commit the sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. It is important to note, that not persisting on the same sin is a condition for the repentance to be accepted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 135:

“And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.”

It is extremely important for a muslim to be persistent in seeking forgiveness as this leads to deliverance from every worry, a way out from every difficulty and support from places where one would not expect. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1518.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the greatest cause of forgiveness namely, not associating anything with Allah, the Exalted. There are two types of associating things with Allah, the Exalted: major polytheism and minor polytheism. The major type is when one worships things other than Allah, the Exalted, or in addition to Him. The minor version is when one acts for other than to please Allah, the Exalted, such as showing off. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. In fact, the one who acts for the sake of people will be told by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. The one who acts in this way will find that they will eventually be exposed in this world and no matter how well they treat others, they will never gain their real love or respect because of their bad intention. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6705.

When one realizes the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, they only intend, think, act and speak for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, out of fear and love for Him. This behaviour minimises the chances of committing sins and whatever sins do occur will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. It is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3797, that the statement that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, removes all wrong actions.

This is the behaviour all muslims must strive to adopt. The foundation of it is gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways please to Allah, the Exalted. This will minimise one's sins and always encourage them towards sincere repentance whenever they happen to sin. This leads to forgiveness, peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Repentance - 2

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave some important pieces of advice.

The second advice given in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should follow up a sin with a righteous deed so that it wipes out the sin. This refers to minor sins only as major sins require sincere repentance. If one adds sincere repentance to their righteous deed then it will erase any sin, minor or major. But a part of acting rightly is to strive not to repeat the sin again, as sinning with the intention of following it up with a righteous deed is a dangerous misleading mentality. One should strive not to commit sins and when they do occur, they must sincerely repent. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Repentance - 3

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4251, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people commit sins but the best person who commits sins is the one who sincerely repents.

As people are not Angels they are bound to commit sins. The thing that makes people special is when they sincerely repent from their sins. Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the sin or a similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

It is important to note, minor sins can be erased through righteous deeds. This has been advised in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 550. It advises that the five daily obligatory prayers and two consecutive Friday congregational prayers erase the minor sins committed in between them, as long as major sins are avoided.

Major sins are only erased through sincere repentance. Therefore, a muslim should strive to avoid all sins, minor and major, by avoiding bad company and the places which sins occur more often. They should gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they adopt the characteristics

which prevent sins, such as steadfastness, patience and the fear of Allah, the Exalted. They should learn how to use the blessings they have been granted correctly, so that they avoid using them in sinful ways. And whenever a sin happens to occur they must immediately sincerely repent, as the time of death is unknown. And they should continue obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without giving up.

Repentance - 4

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2406, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to achieve salvation.

The first thing is to control one's speech. A muslim should avoid evil speech, as only a single evil word is needed to cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. A muslim should avoid vain and useless speech as it is often the first step to evil speech and it wastes one's precious time, which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day. A muslim should strive to either speak good or remain silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176. When one behaves in this manner, even their silence is counted as a good deed.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a person should not leave their home unnecessarily. Behaving in this manner leads to wasting time and both verbal and physical sins. If one truly and sincerely reflects, they will realize that the majority of their sins and the problems they encountered were due to unnecessarily socializing with others. This does not mean it was always the fault of others but it means if one avoids unnecessarily leaving their home, they would sin less and encounter less problems and difficulties. This would also free up their time to learn and act on useful knowledge, such as Islamic knowledge, which is beneficial in all aspects of one's life. Socializing unnecessarily wastes the unique blessing of time, which never returns after it passes. Those who wasted their time on vain and sinful things will face stress in this world and a great regret on

Judgement Day, especially when they witness the reward of those who utilized their time correctly. In addition, socializing unnecessarily also hinders a person from fulfilling their responsibilities and duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people. It also prevents one from the important task of self-reflection. This is needed in order to ensure one is heading in the right direction in life and whether or not they are completing their responsibilities and duties. A lack of self-reflection leads to an aimless life whereby a person has no firm direction in their worldly or religious life. Over socializing also encourages one to become dependent and clingy to people, and this always leads to emotional, mental and social problems, as one's whole life, their happiness and sadness, all revolves around people and their relationships. One can save themselves from all these negative effects by only socializing when it is necessary.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to weep over one's sins. This behaviour shows genuine remorse over one's sins, which is a crucial aspect of sincere repentance. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4252. The other aspects include seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and anyone else who has been wronged, unless this will lead to further trouble. Making a firm promise not to commit the same or similar sin again and where possible, make up for any rights which have been missed or violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Islam does not demand perfection, only a genuine and sincere effort to obey Allah, the Exalted, and when one sins to sincerely repent and strive hard to reform themselves.

Justice - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions, in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest, as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things, such as wealth and authority. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell and has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. An important aspect of this is teaching their dependents about Islam and the importance of implementing its teachings within their lives. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others, such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice, as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

Justice - 2

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a head of state who abused his power by granting immunity to corrupt people. One of the major reasons why society seems to be digressing is because people have abandoned acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6787, that previous nations were destroyed as the authorities would punish the weak when they broke the law but would pardon the rich and influential. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being the head of state, even declared in this Hadith that if his own daughter committed a crime he would enforce the full legal punishment on her. Even though members of the general public might not be in a position to advise their leaders to remain just in their actions but they can influence them indirectly by acting justly in all their dealings and actions. For example, a muslim must act justly in respect to their dependents, such as their children, by treating them equally. This has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3544. They should act justly in all their business dealings, irrespective of who they deal with. If people act with justice on an individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not as they would be convinced the general public would not tolerate it.

Independence - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6470, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever holds back from asking others will be granted independence.

There is no harm in asking for help from others when one is in need but a muslim should not get into this habit as it can lead to a loss of self-respect. This can be dangerous as the one who loses self-respect is more likely to commit sins as they stop caring what Allah, the Exalted, and others think about them. The one who unnecessarily asks others will also begin to rely on others to aid them instead of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, to aid them. Trusting in Allah, the Exalted, involves using the means one has been granted in lawful ways and then believing the outcome, which Allah, the Exalted, alone chooses, will be best for everyone involved. Therefore, a muslim should strive to utilize all the means they have been granted before turning to others for help. The one who behaves in this manner will be granted independence of people by Allah, the Exalted.

Independence - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who is independent of the creation. This means that a muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength, in order to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people unnecessarily, as this habit leads to dependence on them and it reduces one's trust in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens, whatever is destined to be their provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. A muslim should focus on using their resources, such as their physical strength, and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them. From a religious point of view, one can become incorrectly dependent on others when they believe that a person, such as a religious and spiritual teacher, will suffice them in gaining success in both worlds through their supplications and intercession. This attitude only encourages laziness, as one believes they are free to behave how they wish and will still achieve success in both worlds through their spiritual teacher. A Muslim must avoid this misguidance and instead follow in the footsteps of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who had the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet worked hard in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Him. This is the correct attitude which must be adopted.

Independence - 3

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is quite common for people to become dependent on others, such as their family. Even though, having hope in people is not a sin but as they are imperfect a Muslim always runs the risk of being let down, in fact it is inevitable. They should instead strive to rely on Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through his obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as a Muslim who is disobedient will not depend on Allah, the Exalted. They should then fulfil their duties in respect of the creation without expecting or hoping in anything in return from them. This will aid in eliminating their dependency on them. Allah, the Exalted, has made it crystal clear that whoever correctly depends on Him through His sincere obedience will be sufficed from all issues they might face in both worlds. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”

As Allah, the Exalted, is firm on His promises when one depends on Him they too will become steadfast and firm when facing difficulties. But if they rely on people who are prone to change with the passing of time they will become fickle and fail to remain steadfast.

The stronger one's helper and refuge the stronger they will become. If a Muslim seeks refuge with Allah, the Exalted, who has power over all things, through sincere obedience, they will become empowered to

overcome all difficulties. But if they seek refuge and depend on people, who by their nature are weak, they too will become weak in the face of difficulties. This is like a person who seeks refuge in a strong fortified castle during a storm and another who seeks refuge in a straw hut. It does not take a genius to determine who is more likely to overcome the difficulty of the storm successfully.

Contentment - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6470, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is content with what they possess will be made self-sufficient.

The truly rich person is the one who is not needy and greedy for things. This occurs when one becomes satisfied with what they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted. This is achieved when one rightfully believes that Allah, the Exalted, gives what is best to each person according to His infinite knowledge. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

This person is truly rich whereas the one who is always greedy and needy for things is poor, even if they possess much wealth. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. Therefore, contentment with one's provision is true richness whereas the greed for more makes one needy meaning, poor.

Contentment - 2

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated some important characteristics for muslims to adopt.

One of the things is that the richest person is the one who is satisfied with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. The one who is always in need of more worldly things is needy, which is another word for poor, even if they possess much wealth. But the one who is pleased with what they possess is not needy and is therefore rich, even if they possess little wealth or worldly things.

In addition, the one who is pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them will be provided with grace, which will ensure their possessions fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents and it will grant them peace of mind and body. Whereas, those who are not pleased with what they have been granted will not obtain this grace. This will cause them to feel as if their possessions are not enough to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind and body, even if they have the world at their feet.

Satisfaction includes being pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has chosen for a person namely, destiny. A muslim should firmly believe Allah, the Exalted, always chooses what is best for His servant, even if

they do not observe the wisdoms behind His choice. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

If a muslim concentrates on obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, such as patience in times of difficulty and gratitude in times of ease, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they will be provided with peace of mind.

Contentment - 3

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Muslims often get caught up in striving to implement big projects, whether connected to religion or the world, such as building a Mosque. Even though aiming high is encouraged in Islam, one should always bear in mind not to overreach in their goals. When one overreaches beyond their resources attempting to implement their big idea they often fall short of achieving it. Instead, it is often better to aim high but within the limits of one's resources. It often occurs that when one has a habit of aiming high and overreaching, due to a lack of resources, nothing gets accomplished. So they move from one failed project to the next without achieving anything good. Whereas, the one who aims high but limits themselves within their resources, often achieves their goal. And they move from one small project to the next, achieving positive outcomes. Many small achievements then end up being more impactful than a potential large yet single achievement. This is one of the reasons why Islam encourages one to focus on quality instead of quantity. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that the most beloved of deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are those which are regular even if they are few. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464.

Finally, the one who aims within the limits of their resources is less likely to give up doing good and positive things, as they are more likely to achieve a positive outcome than the one who overreaches and aims beyond the limit of their resources.

Financial Dealings - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2076, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, supplicated for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, on those who are lenient in financial matters, such as buying and selling goods, and when they demand the repayment of a loan.

It is important for muslims not to be greedy in financial matters, as greed pushes one towards the unlawful. Even if one avoids the unlawful, greed will deprive a muslim of this supplication of mercy, as greed will prevent them from acting leniently with others. Put simply, greed takes one far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from the people and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

A muslim must never take advantage of others by over pricing their goods especially, in times of general difficulty, such as a financial crisis. In all financial matters muslims should make all matters clear to the other people involved, as hiding things, such as a defect in their goods, is deceitful and contradicts the characteristic of a true muslim. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when people deceive others in financial matters, the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, are removed. This removes satisfaction with their wealth, irrespective of how much they obtain and possess. This in turn causes one to become greedier. The more one becomes greedy, the less peace they will obtain.

Finally, when others are in financial difficulties a muslim should strive to aid them according to their means, as this leads to the constant support of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. In fact, the one who waves a debt they are owed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be relieved by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225.

Showing leniency and good conduct during business dealings will improve one's business reputation, which in turn will aid their business. So adopting leniency in matters of business leads to benefit in both worldly and religious matters.

Finally, adopting leniency in matters of business will also ensure a Muslim understands that their business is not their number one priority in life. It is nothing but a means to an end, the end being preparing practically for the hereafter. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, the one who fails to show leniency in matters of business, will become greedier. And greed always focuses a person's attention to earning and hoarding the material world. This becomes their ultimate goal and number one priority in life. This then prevents them from practically preparing for the hereafter.

Financial Dealings - 2

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In fact, one should treat others how they desire to be treated by people.

In respect to business dealings, a muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes avoiding deceiving others by making them pay excessively for goods. A muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way a muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters, they should not mistreat others.

Acting righteously includes avoiding illegal practices discussed in Islam and the law of the land. If one is not happy with the business laws of their country, they should not do business there.

In addition, acting righteously also includes using one's business success in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure their business and wealth becomes a source of comfort and peace for them in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But those who misuse their business success will find that it becomes a source of their stress and misery, as they have forgotten Allah, the Exalted, the One who granted them the success. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Financial Dealings - 3

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2482, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all lawful spending gains reward from Allah, the Exalted, except the wealth which is spent on construction.

This includes all spending on lawful things which is free from excessiveness, waste or extravagance. Spending on construction which is necessary is not included in this Hadith but the construction which is beyond one's needs is. This is disliked as spending on construction easily leads to waste and extravagance. In addition, the one who spends wealth on construction is less likely to donate charity and spend in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Also this behavior often encourages a muslim to adopt hopes for a long life, as the one who believes their stay in this world is extremely short will not waste energy and wealth on constructing a beautiful home. The greater one's hope for a long life, the less righteous deeds they will perform believing they can always perform good deeds in the future. It also causes one to delay sincere repentance believing they can always change for the better in the future. Finally, it causes one to dedicate more efforts to the world in order to create a more comfortable life for their supposed long stay in this world.

Actively taking part in unnecessary construction occupies one's time which prevents them from performing voluntary righteous deeds, such as fasting and the voluntary night prayer, out of extreme fatigue. It also prevents them from striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge.

Finally, in reality, taking part in unnecessary construction never ends. Meaning, the moment a person completes one part of their home they move to the next until the cycle repeats itself.

Therefore, muslims should adhere to what is within their necessity in respect to all things, not just construction, so that they can avoid these negative consequences.

Financial Dealings - 4

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the attitude of some people during the outbreak of the Corona Virus. It is important for muslims to show the world the true teachings of Islam by practically demonstrating the behaviour of a true muslim. It is obvious many people all over the world are going through difficulties because of the virus, such as financial difficulties. Therefore, a muslim should never take advantage of these difficulties in any way, such as increasing the price of their products, knowing people are desperate. Or by lowering the wages of their employees, knowing they will tolerate this behaviour because of the difficulty they are facing. It is vital for people to recognize a muslim not through their Islamic dress but through their behaviour. People should recognize the greatness of Islam through this. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, that a muslim selling something should reveal its defects to the buyer before they purchase it, as lying will only remove the blessings of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims should therefore never take advantage of the difficulties of others especially, in a time of widespread difficulty and stress. If anything, muslims should make things easier for others by offering them any aid possible. As long as muslims are busy helping others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, Allah, the Exalted, will continue supporting them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. The one who receives the support of Allah, the Exalted, can never fail in this world or in the next. But the one who takes advantage of the difficulties of others may well find that they are left to their own devices in this world and the next. This will only lead to stress in this world, as the very things they earn through this attitude will become a source of stress for them and it may well lead to destruction in the next world, even if this is not obvious to a person in this world.

Ties of Kinship - 1

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1979, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that maintaining the ties of kinship leads to an increase in wealth and life.

It is a duty on muslims to maintain the ties of kinship, as severing them is a major sin. The one who severs ties of kinship for worldly reasons will be cut off from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6518. In fact, this is such a serious sin that a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1909, warns that a person who severs ties of kinship over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise. Maintaining ties of kinship involves fulfilling the rights of one's relatives according to the teachings of Islam in order to please Allah, the Exalted. They should seek the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, at all times and not the pleasure of their relatives, as this encourages one to compromise on the teachings of Islam. One must not expect nor demand gratitude from their relatives when fulfilling their rights, as doing so would prove their insincerity. A muslim must gently and kindly command good and forbid evil and in cases where a relative fails to repent from their sins, a muslim should not sever ties with them, even over religious issues. They should instead continue aiding them in beneficial things, as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent. Whereas, cutting off from them may well push them further away from right guidance.

The increase in wealth mentioned in the main Hadith could mean that Allah, the Exalted, provides them with more financial opportunities, which causes an increase in their lawful wealth. More importantly, it

could mean that Allah, the Exalted, blesses a muslim's wealth with such grace that it fulfills their needs and the needs of their dependents and provides them with peace of mind and body, which in reality is true wealth. The one who severs ties of kinship will lose out on this grace, which will lead them to feeling unsatisfied irrespective of how much wealth they obtain. And it will always seem that their wealth is not enough to cover their needs and the needs of their dependents.

The increase in life mentioned in the main Hadith refers to being granted grace in one's time so that they manage to fulfill all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, and to people, while still finding time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world without excessiveness, extravagance or waste. But the one who severs the ties of kinship will lose out on this grace and so no matter how little responsibilities they have, it will never seem like they have enough time to fulfill them all and enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world with moderation. They will instead spend the day dealing with one issue after the other without any rest or peace of mind.

Ties of Kinship - 2

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2612, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who possesses complete faith is the one who is best in conduct and most kind to their family.

Unfortunately, some have adopted the bad habit of treating non-relatives in a kind manner, while mistreating their own family. They behave in this manner as they do not understand the importance of treating one's own family kindly and as they fail to appreciate their family. A muslim will never achieve success until they fulfill both aspects of faith. The first is fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The second is to fulfill the rights of people, which includes treating them kindly. None have more right to this kind treatment than one's own family. A muslim must aid their family in all matters which are good and warn them against bad things and practices in a gentle way, according to the teachings of Islam. They should not blindly support them in bad things simply because they are their relatives nor should they fail to help them in good matters because of some ill feelings towards them, as this contradicts Islamic teachings. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

The best way to guide others is through a practical example, as this is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is much more effective than just verbal guidance.

One must learn the rights they are owed and the rights they owe others, especially their relatives, to ensure they fulfill them. A Muslim must always remember that Allah, the Exalted, will ask each person whether they fulfilled the rights of others, He will not ask them if people fulfilled their rights. Therefore, one must be concerned about what they will be questioned about, meaning, the rights of others, and therefore strive to fulfill them according to the teachings of Islam.

Finally, one should generally choose gentleness in all matters especially, when dealing with their family. Even if their commit sins they should be warned in a gentle manner and still be aided in matters which are good, as this kindness is more effective in bringing them back to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, than treating them harshly.

Ties of Kinship - 3

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1952, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most virtuous gift a parent can give their child is to teach them good character.

This Hadith reminds muslims to be more concerned about the faith of their relatives, such as their children, over acquiring and imparting wealth and properties to them. It is important to understand, worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Unfortunately, many muslims are so concerned about teaching their children how to build an empire and acquire much wealth and properties that they neglect teaching them the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes good manners towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. A muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for teaching their children good manners, as their moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly.

In addition, it is extremely difficult to teach good manners to children when they get older and become set in their ways. If one fails to teach their child good manners then they will only become a source of stress for them in both worlds.

The best way a parent can teach their child good manners is by leading by example. They must learn and act on the teachings of Islam and become a practical role model for their child to follow.

Today is the day a muslim should truly reflect on the gift they wish to impart to their children and relatives. This is how a muslim sends forward good to the hereafter but also leaves good behind, as a righteous child which supplicates for their deceased parent benefits them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

Ties of Kinship - 4

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a mentality which many people especially, Asians possess. It is the extreme need in forcing people such as relatives to remain physically together. Even though, it is not an evil intention yet, in this day and age it often leads to more trouble than good. As people are not perfect they will make mistakes which upset others such as their relatives. But if this person only met and conversed with their relatives once in a while there is a much greater chance the mistake will be overlooked by others so that it does not become a point of argument. But if this same person was constantly around their relatives it would be much more likely their attitude and behaviour would lead to arguments and friction amongst their relatives. In other words, a person is less likely to argue and more likely to be tolerant with someone they only see once in a while than someone they are always around. This is a fact which everyone will understand if they ponder over it. Unfortunately, some people do not understand that it is better to be physically separated but be at peace with one another than be together in conflict and friction. Arguments only lead to mental separation which often has more of a negative effect on families than physical separation. Whereas, being physically separated does not lead to a mental separation. In fact, it often leads to greater mutual respect and appreciation. As the famous saying goes separation makes the heart grow fonder.

It is important to note, that it is the duty of a Muslim to uphold their ties of kinship irrespective of if they are physically with their relatives or not. But this discussion means that Muslims should not believe a bit of physical

separation between people is a bad thing. It in fact can be a cause for the bonds between them to strengthen.

Ties of Kinship - 5

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a problem which affects most Muslim families. With the passing of time they become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the

Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Ties of Kinship - 6

I saw a news documentary a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the rise of drug trafficking and gangs, especially amongst the muslim youth. In most cases, the first people that need to take responsibility and prevent this occurring are parents. Unfortunately, many parents point fingers and claim that school teachers, the police or the Imams of Mosques must keep the youth away from gangs and dealing drugs. Even though, they all have a duty, but the primary and biggest duty lies with the parents.

Parents must educate their children continuously on the bad effects of gangs and illegal drugs. How it ruins the lives of the people involved and those who are connected to them, such as their families. It is just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2101. A bad friend is like a bad smell which infects their friends as well as others.

The key to keeping the youth away from gangs is education from parents primarily and then from others, such as siblings and teachers. Parents must question the whereabouts of their children in a gentle way. They must enquire about who they are going out with, where they are going and about their activities. They should even meet their children's friends to ensure they are suitable for companionship. If their children are in possession of expensive things, which the parents did not purchase for them, they must question this. If children are questioned like this from a young age they will

get familiar with it and not become upset when they are questioned later on in their lives. This is the duty of parents as indicated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Unfortunately, some parents believe their duty is only to earn wealth for their children. So they busy themselves with this and neglect the more important duty of rightly guiding and keeping an active eye on their children. Yes, earning wealth is important but it cannot take priority over educating one's children on the difference between right and wrong.

This news documentary also discussed how some drug dealers fabricate or misinterpret the verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to justify what they do. This is absurd, as Islam clearly prohibits anything which causes harm to oneself and others, such as dealing or taking illegal drugs. They even claim that selling illegal drugs to non-muslims is acceptable. But this completely challenges the teachings of Islam, as a muslim must treat everyone with kindness and respect, irrespective of their faith. In fact, one cannot be a true muslim or a believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from a person and their possessions. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. If a muslim does not have permission to disrespect the gods of other religions, how can Islam encourage muslims to mistreat people from other faiths? Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 108:

“And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge...”

Behaving in this manner was in fact something the previous nations did and Allah, the Exalted, harshly criticized them over it. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 75:

“And among the People of the Scripture is he who, if you entrust him with a great amount [of wealth], he will return it to you. And among them is he who, if you entrust him with a [single] coin, he will not return it to you unless you are constantly standing over him [demanding it]. That is because they say, "There is no blame upon us concerning the unlearned." And they speak untruth about Allāh while they know [it].”

If the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, stressed the good treatment of animals in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, how can Islam give permission to mistreat humans?

Educating one's children will prevent them from being duped into believing and acting on evil statements and advice. This education begins at home; parents must step up and fulfil this duty. Only then, does this duty extend to others, such as school teachers.

A parent will be exonerated on the Day of Judgement if they fulfil this duty, irrespective of how their child chooses to behave. But if they fail this duty, they will be held accountable in both this world and the next.

Ties of Kinship - 7

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the stress of family life, such as raising children. Even though there are many things a person can learn and do to reduce this stress, only one important thing will be discussed. Every parent or legal guardian who raises a child will face two elements. The first is their own duty and responsibility towards the child under their care. For example, it is their responsibility to provide them with the necessities of life such as food, clothing and housing. In addition, they must arrange for both their worldly and religious education, such as teaching them the good manners discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones...”

The second element involves the child's own life choices. For example, whether they want to study hard to achieve success or be lazy. These choices can be between two lawful things, such as the example mentioned or between right and wrong. For example, a child may have to choose between a life of crime or a lawful occupation. All children must eventually make these choices and cannot be forced to choose a particular path by someone else, such as their parent. In reality, parents cannot constantly follow their children and somehow force them to make the right choices.

It is important for muslims to understand that they will be questioned and held accountable by Allah, the Exalted, regarding the first element, which is their duty and responsibilities given to them by Allah, the Exalted. But they will not be held accountable for the second element, which are the independent choices their children make. So a muslim should bear this in mind and concentrate fully on fulfilling their duty and not stress about the second element which is out of their control. The same way an intelligent person does not stress about the weather, knowing controlling it is out of their hands, they should not stress about the second element and instead concentrate on what is in their control and what they will be held accountable for.

Ties of Kinship - 8

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be a loser.

It is important to understand that the first three things mentioned in this Hadith are very transient and imperfect. They may give someone temporary happiness but ultimately these things will become a burden for them as they are linked to the material world and not to the thing which grants ultimate and permanent success namely, faith. One only needs to observe the rich and famous in order to understand that wealth does not bring happiness. In fact, the rich are the most unsatisfied and unhappy people on Earth. Marrying someone for the sake of their lineage is foolish as it does not guarantee the person will make a good spouse. In fact, if the marriage does not work out, it destroys the family bond the two families possessed before the marriage. Marrying only for the sake of beauty meaning, love, is not wise as this is a fickle emotion which changes with the passing of time and with one's mood. How many couples supposedly drowned in love ended up hating each other?

But it is important to note, that this Hadith does not mean one should find a spouse who is poor, as it is important to get married to someone who can financially support a family. Neither does it mean one should not be

attracted to their spouse, as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married. The main and ultimate quality a muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Put simply, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will treat their spouse well in both times of happiness and difficulty. On the other hand, those who are irreligious will mistreat their spouse whenever they are upset. This is one of the main reasons why domestic violence has increased amongst muslims in recent years. And even when they are pleased with their spouse, they will still fail to fulfil their rights because of their ignorance, which piety helps to remove. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

Finally, the pious person is always more concerned about fulfilling the rights of others, such as their spouse, then they are concerned about people fulfilling their rights. This is because they understand that Allah, the Exalted, will question them whether or not they fulfilled the rights of people. He will not ask them if people fulfilled their rights, as this will be dealt with when Allah, the Exalted, questions others, not when He questions them. Whereas, the impious Muslim will only ever care about their rights, rights that they have taken from society, culture, fashion and their imagination and not from Islam. As a result, they will never be truly pleased with their spouse, even if their spouse fulfills their rights according to the teachings of Islam. This is the reason why ignorance of Islam and divorces are so strongly linked.

Finally, if a muslim desires to get married they should firstly obtain the knowledge associated with it, such as the rights they owe their spouse, the rights they are owed from their spouse and how to correctly deal with one's spouse in different situations. Unfortunately, ignorance of this leads to many arguments and divorces as people demand things which their spouse is not obliged to fulfill. Therefore, knowledge, which is the root of piety, is the foundation of a healthy and successful marriage.

Ties of Kinship - 9

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In

most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

“...And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer.”

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the

benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a muslim should command their relatives to do good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered muslims to fulfill this vital duty even with their non-muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a

relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a muslim to cut off ties from another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or sever links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

Religion of Ease - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 39, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that religion is simple and straight forward. And a muslim should not over burden themselves, as they will not be able to keep up with it.

This means that a muslim should always lead a simple religious and worldly life. Islam does not demand muslims to overburden themselves in performing righteous deeds. But it in fact teaches simplicity, which is the most beloved religion to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287. A muslim should firstly strive to fulfil their obligatory duties, which are undoubtedly within their strength to fulfil as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a muslim with more than they can bear. This is confirmed in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286 of the Holy Quran:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”

Next, they should take some time out of their day to study Islamic teachings so that they can act on the Holy Quran and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to their strength. This attracts the love of Allah, the Exalted, according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

If a muslim persists on this behaviour they will be provided with such mercy that they will fulfil all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and find time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world without excess, waste or extravagance.

This is how a muslim makes things easier for themselves. And if they possess dependents, such as children, they should teach them the same, thereby making things easier for them also. Overburdening oneself makes things hard and can push one to completely quit. And relaxing too much will make things hard as one will lose out on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds through laziness. A balance is therefore best, which Islam always encourages.

As Islam is simple, the lawful and unlawful are clear, easy to understand and easy to comply with. One must therefore not complicate things for themselves or their dependents by researching and acting on religious knowledge that is not rooted in the two sources of guidance meaning, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one adheres strictly to these two sources, they will find Islam easy to understand and implement.

Finally, by extension one should strive to keep their worldly life simple. This is achieved when one strives for the material world, such as lawful wealth, according to their needs and responsibilities while avoiding extravagance and waste. The more one adheres to this the more relaxed their worldly life will become. When this is coupled with their simple religion, it leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds.

Religion of Ease - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6125, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised to make things easy for others, instead of making things difficult. And to give glad tidings to others and not scare them.

A muslim should always make things easy, firstly for themselves by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, so that they can fulfill their obligatory duties, act on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will provide them with plenty of time to enjoy lawful things without being wasteful or extravagant. A muslim should act according to their strength in respect to voluntary righteous deeds and not overburden themselves, as this is disliked in Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. A balanced approach is always best.

In addition, muslims should make things easy for others, especially in religious matters, so that people do not grow averse to Islam, believing it is a burdensome religion while it is a simple and easy religion. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287. This is important to teach others, especially children. If children wrongfully believe Islam is a difficult religion they will turn away from it when they get older. Children should be taught that Islam has some

obligations which do not take much time to fulfill and leaves plenty of time for them to have fun in good and healthy ways.

But it is important to note, making things easy for oneself or others in religious matters does not mean a muslim should be lazy and teach others to be lazy, as the minimum obligations must be fulfilled at all times, unless one is exempt by Islam. The one who acts lazily is not obeying Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires.

Another aspect of making things easy for others includes a muslim not demanding their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means they have been granted, such as their physical or financial strength, to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, failing to fulfil the rights of others can lead to punishment. In order to make things easy for others a muslim should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a muslim should not strive to fulfil the rights of others but it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves, if they possess the means to do so without trouble, especially if the child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next. But those who make things difficult for others may find that Allah, the Exalted, makes things difficult for them in both worlds.

A muslim must remind themselves and others of the countless blessings of Allah, the Exalted, and the great reward He bestows on muslims in this world and in the next on those who obey Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This approach, in most cases, is more effective in encouraging people towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Only in some cases when someone is indulging in wishful thinking and disobeying Allah, the Exalted, while expecting they will succeed, should a muslim warn them of the consequences of their actions thereby, inspiring the fear of Allah, the Exalted, in them.

A balance is best whereby one uses hope in Allah, the Exalted, to encourage His obedience and fear of Him in order to prevent sins. And whenever one feels imbalanced or observes others who have become imbalanced, a muslim should act appropriately in order to adjust themselves and others back to the correct middle path.

Religion of Ease - 3

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7129, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would choose the right time when discussing religious issues with his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as he did not want to over burden or bore them.

Even though, a muslim has no excuses but to fulfill their obligatory duties and learn and act on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the practical proof of one's claim to faith, none the less, each muslim should act according to their mental and physical strength and treat others according to their mental and physical strength in order to ensure they themselves do not get fed up nor cause others to become fed up of Islam either.

It is important to understand each person has been created unique and given different blessings and gifts. For example, some have the strength to perform much voluntary fasts while others do not. Some have the mental strength to spend the day studying the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas others do not. Some can happily discuss religious issues all day with others, while others just do not have the attention or mental strength to do so. This does not mean those who do not possess the strength to do these things are bad muslims as Allah, the Exalted, will judge each person according to their potential, strength, intention and the deeds they performed. This discussion means that muslims should not be too hard on

themselves or others when it comes to striving on voluntary religious matters. A muslim should strive to improve bit by bit to ensure they do not get fed up and give up completely. If a muslim has been granted the strength to strive in voluntary religious matters, they should praise Allah, the Exalted, as none but Him as granted this to them. Understanding this will prevent the deadly sin of pride, an atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

One must make things easy for others, especially children, so that they understand that Islam is a simple and easy religion, with a few obligations, all aimed to aid them in achieving success and peace in both worlds.

Religion of Ease - 4

I saw a news report a while ago, which will be briefly discussed. It reported on a successful non-muslim businessman. It discussed how he struggled at the start of his business and how many years of effort, stress and sacrifice led to a successful multi-million pound business. It reminded me of a verse of the Holy Quran which declares that Allah, the Exalted, never wastes the efforts of people. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 115:

“...Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.”

This verse provides hope that as long as one strives to do something lawful and beneficial their efforts will not be wasted. If Allah, the Exalted, does not waste the efforts of people who do not even believe in Him, why would He not support the muslims who believe in His Oneness and Lordship? If Allah, the Exalted, does not waste the efforts of people when they strive for the material world, how can He then waste the efforts of those who strive to achieve good in the hereafter?

People should therefore, never give up striving to achieve good in both this world and in the next. Unfortunately, some muslims have given up struggling to earn a lawful income after facing some hardship. They instead opt to receive social benefits and become a burden on society. Those who are rightly entitled to receive benefits should continue to utilise them, as it is

their right. But those who have the ability to earn for themselves should do so and contribute to the society.

This verse also encourages muslims to continue doing good to others, even if they do not appreciate their efforts. If one acts with sincerity meaning, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they should be confident their efforts have been recorded and will be rewarded in both worlds.

To conclude, whatever lawful action a muslim performs, whether it is worldly, such as a business opportunity, or whether they perform a religious deed, they should put full effort into it, knowing that Allah, the Exalted, will support them and grant them success, sooner or later.

Modesty - 1

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2458, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that showing true modesty to Allah, the Exalted, involves guarding the head and what it contains and to protect the stomach and what it contains and to remember death often. He concluded by declaring that whoever intends to seek the hereafter should leave the adornments of the material world.

This Hadith proves that modesty is something which extends beyond one's clothing. It is something which encompasses every aspect of one's life. Protecting the head includes guarding the tongue, eyes, ears and even the thoughts from sins and vain things. Vain things are important to avoid as they will be a regret for a person on Judgement Day and they are often the first step to committing sins. Even though, one may hide what they say and what they see from others but they cannot hide these things from Allah, the Exalted. So protecting these parts of the body is a sign of true modesty.

Guarding the stomach means one should avoid unlawful wealth and food. This will lead to the rejection of one's good deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Just like one's intention is the inward and hidden foundation of Islam, the outward and apparent foundation of Islam is earning and utilizing the lawful.

Modesty to Allah, the Exalted, also includes remembering death often. Remembering death is important as it encourages one to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from sins, as one is never sure when they will encounter death. It reminds one that this world is not their permanent home and they will certainly move from it. Remembering this will encourage one to prepare for their destination meaning, the hereafter. This preparation involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who avoids the remembrance of death will neglect preparing for their inevitable trip to the hereafter and as a result they will concentrate all their efforts and utilise their blessings and resources on enjoying and beautifying this world. This attitude will prevent one from remembering Allah, the Exalted, and sincerely obeying Him, and this in turn, leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Finally, modesty towards Allah, the Exalted, includes giving priority to the hereafter over the excess of this material world. It is important to note, this includes taking from the material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excess or extravagance, as these are disliked by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 7 Al Araf, verse 31:

"...and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess."

Prioritising the hereafter also involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of on satisfying one's desires. The one who behaves in this manner will find peace and success in this world and in the hereafter. This success and peace is therefore only obtained by prioritising the hereafter over enjoying the unnecessary aspects of this material world. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Modesty - 2

The one who always remembers that Allah, the Exalted, is observing them will adopt shame and modesty of Him. Remembering the countless favours of Allah, the Exalted, while a person remains ungrateful will also encourage them to become modest of Allah, the Exalted. Finally, remembering that a day will come when they will be questioned about every little thing in their life by Allah, the Exalted, will also inspire one to adopt shame of Allah, the Exalted.

The thing which strengthens shame of Allah, the Exalted, is the fear of Allah, the Exalted, whenever an evil desire enters one's heart. This is because the heart believes that Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of this desire. If this attitude becomes established in a person then their shame of Allah, the Exalted, will become strong. In addition, fearing that Allah, the Exalted, will turn away from them in dislike because of their desires and actions also strengthens one's shame of Allah, the Exalted. But this modesty and shame can become weak and in some cases disappear if one abandons examining themselves in the way described and by abandoning sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in His commands and prohibitions.

The Hereafter - 1

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2417, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person's feet will not move on Judgment Day until they answer five questions.

The first is about their life and what they did with it. This refers to the time given to a person. A muslim should understand that death often comes at an unexpected time. A muslim should not assume they will reach elderly age, as many die before this occurs. In reality, no matter what age one reaches, everyone admits that their life went by in a flash. A muslim should not believe they will obey Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers, when they reach elderly age, as this is wishful thinking. Even if one reaches this age, as they were too engrossed in the material world during their life, the change in their environment will have little positive effect on their character and obedience to Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should instead utilize the time they have been granted instead of delaying by obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they obtain peace and success in both worlds, irrespective of how long they live. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But the one who fails to utilize their time in the correct way will find that they waste it on vain things, which prevents them from obtaining peace and success in both worlds, as they did not use their resources in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Failing to use one's time correctly will also be a great regret on Judgement Day, especially when they observe the reward of those who utilized their time correctly.

The next question advised in the main Hadith under discussion will be about their knowledge and what they did with it. It is important for muslims to strive to acquire useful worldly and religious knowledge and more importantly act on it in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents, according to the teachings of Islam and in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, and fulfill the rights of people, correctly. The one who remains

ignorant or fails to act on their knowledge is unlikely to achieve success in either worlds. A person will only reach their desired location when they first find the correct path and then journey down it. But if a person fails to locate the correct path meaning, obtain knowledge, or fails to journey down it, meaning, act on their knowledge, they will not reach their desired destination meaning, success in both worldly and religious matters. Useful knowledge which is acted upon leads to all good, whereas, misusing knowledge leads to trouble in both worlds.

The third and fourth questions people will be asked on Judgment Day are about their wealth specifically, how they earned it and how they spent it. Firstly, muslims must ensure that they only obtain lawful wealth and avoid doubtful or unlawful wealth. Unlawful wealth only leads to the rejection of all of one's righteous deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. If one's foundation is based on the unlawful then everything coming from it will be considered unlawful and therefore rejected by Allah, the Exalted. The same way the internal foundation of Islam is one's intention, the external foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful. A muslim is free to obtain lawful wealth and spend it on lawful things, such as fulfilling one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. Wealth can become a great blessing for a person in both worlds when it is obtained and spent correctly. But if it is not, it will become a great regret for them in both worlds. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6444, that the wealthy will have little good on the Day of Judgment, except for those who spent in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Before spending on vain things, one should reflect on losing out on the great reward which will be granted to those who spent their wealth correctly on Judgement Day. This will ensure they only spend in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and avoid sinful and vain expenditure.

The final question will be about one's body and how they used it. A muslim must therefore use every organ of their body, such as their sight and hearing, in the correct way, as prescribed by Islam. This is true gratitude and therefore leads to further blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favour]...”

One must ensure they avoid evil and vain speech, as the latter will be a great regret on Judgement Day and as it often leads to evil speech. One should speak what is good or remain silent.

In addition, they must use their physical strength in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, before they reach a day when they lose it and are no longer able to perform righteous deeds. It is hoped that the one who uses their strength in the correct way will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, during their time of weakness. In fact, the one who uses their good health correctly will be granted the same reward when they fall sick, even if they do not perform the same good deeds anymore. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500.

Finally, a muslim must keep their physical and verbal harm away from the self and possessions of others, as this is a sign of a true muslim and believer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Hereafter - 2

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some righteous deeds which continue benefiting a muslim after their death namely, ongoing charity, useful knowledge and a righteous child who supplicates for their deceased parent.

It is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example of this is the great empire of Pharaoh. Islam not only teaches muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches muslims to leave a lovely legacy behind, from which they and other people can gain benefit from. Unfortunately, many muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themselves, as the moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind and if it is righteous they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them, then they should prepare something which will benefit them after their death, so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

The ongoing charity mentioned in the main Hadith includes anything from which the creation continues to benefit from, such as a water well. As long as the creation benefits from it the donor will continue to receive reward, even after their death.

Useful knowledge includes both worldly and religious knowledge which benefit people. According to the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3641, leaving useful knowledge behind is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. Therefore, Muslims must strive to concentrate on fulfilling this tradition instead of concentrating on leaving wealth and properties behind. This part of the main Hadith also encourages one to gain and act on beneficial knowledge, as one first needs to learn before they can teach others. If one struggles to learn and teach, then they should organize for someone else to learn and teach, such as sponsoring a student of knowledge. This will ensure they gain a full share of reward of any useful knowledge spread by this student of knowledge.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith can only be fulfilled when one raises their child according to Islamic teachings. Otherwise, they will not bother with supplicating on behalf of their deceased parents with sincerity. The best way one can achieve this is to lead by example. Meaning, a parent must learn and act on Islamic teachings and be a practical role model for their child to follow. The one who behaves in such a manner will find that their child becomes a blessing for them during their life and after their death, as their child will sincerely supplicate on their behalf regularly.

The Hereafter - 3

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6442, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person's true wealth is what they send ahead to the hereafter whereas, what they leave behind is in reality, the wealth of their inheritors.

It is important for muslims to send as many blessings, such as their wealth, as they can to the hereafter by using them in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This includes spending on one's needs and the needs of their dependents without being wasteful, excessive or extravagant. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006.

But if a muslim does not use their blessings correctly, they will become a source of stress and punishment for them in both worlds, as they have forgotten Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

And if they hoard them and leave them behind for their inheritors, then they will be held accountable for obtaining them even though others will enjoy them after they depart. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379.

In addition, if their inheritors use the blessings correctly, then they will obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted, while the one who collected it will be left empty handed on Judgment Day. Or if their inheritor misuses the blessings then it will become a great regret for both the one who earned the blessing and their inheritor especially, if they did not teach their inheritor, such as their child, how to correctly use the blessings, as this was a duty on them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

A Muslim must remember that one's family and all the worldly blessings they hoarded will abandon them at their grave and only their deeds will remain with them. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6514. Therefore, they must convert their worldly blessings into good deeds, by using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they take them with them to their lonely grave.

Muslims should therefore fulfill their responsibilities towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and ensure they take the rest of their blessings with them to the hereafter by using them correctly as prescribed by Islam. Otherwise, they will lead a stressful life in this world, even if they possess the entire world, as Allah, the Exalted, the Controller of hearts, only grants peace of mind to those who use their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to

Him, and they will be left empty handed and full of regrets on Judgment Day. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

"Say, "Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.""

The Hereafter - 4

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2559, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell is surrounded by desires.

This means the path which leads to Paradise contains difficulties and hardships. In most cases, a person cannot obtain good in this world without going through some sort of difficulty, such as exerting one's energy, then how can one believe they can obtain Paradise without facing difficulties? If one turns the pages of history they will observe the righteous always faced difficulties but as they knew the path of Paradise contained difficulties they maintained their focus on the destination instead of the difficulties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been tested more than him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472. Therefore, muslims must realize the fact that facing some difficulties in this world is an extremely small price to pay to obtain the permanent bliss of Paradise. Therefore, they should constantly focus on the destination, in every time of ease, so that they adopt gratitude, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and focus on the destination, in every time of difficulty, by adopting patience, which involves avoiding complaining and maintaining sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through speech and actions.

The path to Hell is full of desires. This indicates the importance of maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful pleasures in this world, a muslim should minimize these as much as possible as these lawful desires often lead to unlawful desires. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who behaves in such a manner will safe guard their faith and honor. A muslim should never obey their desires or the desires of others if it means they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the pleasure of fulfilling desires vanishes quickly whereas the regret and the potential punishment will last long.

To conclude, a desire fulfilled will not make one feel better if they end up in Hell. And a difficulty one faces will not make them feel bad if they end up in Paradise.

The Hereafter - 5

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing that as they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting, then they will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state, which includes being raised with the righteous, as they practically followed in their

footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves misusing the blessings they were granted by Him, and believe that they will somehow be resurrected in a good state thereby joining the pious in Paradise. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

The Hereafter - 6

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7420, the Holy prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the only wealth one truly possesses is connected to three things.

The first is what a person spends of their wealth on obtaining and consuming food. A muslim should spend reasonably on food without excessiveness, waste or extravagance as this can be considered a sin. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 31:

“...and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”

It is vital for muslims to only consume the lawful as one's supplication is rejected if they consume the unlawful according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346. If one's supplication is rejected how can the rest of their actions possibly be accepted by Allah, the Exalted? In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342, indicates that any good deed rooted in the unlawful is rejected. Just like the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention, similarly the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful.

Finally, a Muslim should adopt the mindset whereby they eat simple food so that they eat in order to live and not live in order to eat, whereby they are constantly distracted by their stomach from more important responsibilities and duties.

The next thing one spends their true wealth on is on their clothes. Again, a muslim should avoid extravagance and waste, as these people have been labeled the siblings of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils...”

A muslim should be pleased with nice, clean and simple clothing, as this is an aspect of faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118. Islam is not against appearing nice but one must understand that this is easily obtainable without spending much wealth or time. Dedication to appearing nice must never hinder one from their duties and responsibilities. The truth is that the more one indulges in their appearance the more they will adopt extravagance in other aspects of their life, such as their car, home and food. This will prevent them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

The final wealth a person truly owns is what they send ahead to the hereafter by spending it in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This includes spending on one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This includes all the blessings one has been granted, not just wealth. The more one uses these blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more peace and success in both worlds they will obtain. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

To conclude, a muslim should remember that the first two things have already been guaranteed by Allah, the Exalted, as they are a part of their provision which cannot change and was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, they should be moderate in seeking them and instead focus more on the last aspect. All other forms of obtaining and using wealth in reality, does not belong to a person and will be left behind for others to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it on Judgment Day.

The Hereafter - 7

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that on Judgment Day the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation. This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour in order to appreciate how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy, relaxed and misused the blessings they were granted during their lives on Earth, will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been

granted in ways pleasing to Him, so that they can obtain peace and comfort in this world and on the Day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

The Hereafter - 8

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 484, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the person who will be closest to him on Judgment Day will be the one who sent the most blessings and salutations on him.

Sending blessings and salutations on the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, verbally has been commanded in the Holy Quran and advised in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3370. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 56:

“Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace.”

But it is important to note, if one desires to correctly send blessings and salutations on him they must support their words through actions by learning and acting on his traditions. They should not reorder the priority of his traditions according to their desires. This is in fact the first step which allows one to fulfil another verse of the Holy Quran, chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

When one persists on this attitude it will allow them to prioritise preparing for the hereafter over this material world without neglecting their worldly duties. Meaning, it will show them how to use the blessings they have been granted correctly so that they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and towards people. This includes fulfilling their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This will allow one to navigate through each situation correctly, whether there are times of ease or difficulties, without going overboard in devoting themselves to the material world, their own desires or other people. This attitude will allow them to put everything and everyone in their rightful place within their life without neglecting or excessively devoting themselves to anything or any person.

Allah, the Exalted, would not have set an example in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which was not possible to follow and adopt. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

Each person can achieve this according to their own potential but this requires a sincere effort which is supported by actions. This is the true

meaning of sending blessings and salutations on the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner practically proves their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and as a result they will join him in the hereafter. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

The Hereafter - 9

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality, each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world in the form of their deeds. If a muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world, the home they will only remain in for a short time, they must strive harder in beautifying their grave, as the journey to it is inevitable and the stay there very long. And if one suffers in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith

found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267. One must never forget that the people and worldly things, such as their business, they dedicate most of their energy to, will abandon them when they reach their grave. Only their deeds will accompany them, the same deeds which will determine whether they are placed in a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell.

Finally, a person must not be fooled into assuming that one's faith is good enough to ensure their garden of Paradise. Faith is an inward state which must be reflected outwardly through one's deeds. This is what the Knower of what is in the hearts has commanded. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer...We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And the truth is that as faith is like a tree, it must be watered and nourished by righteous deeds. If one fails to nourish their plant of faith then they may well find that it withers away before they reach their grave.

The Hereafter - 10

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 103, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that whoever has their deeds scrutinized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day will be punished.

It is important for muslims to understand that even though enjoying the lawful pleasures of this material world are not prohibited, they often lead to the unlawful. For example, vain speech is usually the first step before sinful speech. In addition, the more one indulges in unnecessary lawful things the longer their accountability will be on Judgment Day. One should bear in mind that Judgment Day will be a difficult day. For example, the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421. While one waits for their accounting and during their final judgement, Hell will be face to face with them. Therefore, the longer one's accounting, the more stress they will endure. Even though, a muslim may be forgiven and saved by Allah, the Exalted, but none the less, the longer their accountability the greater stress they will endure. Seeing as Judgment Day will be fifty thousand years long, according to the Holy Quran, it does not make sense to enjoy a few decades of lawful pleasures if it means one will face a difficult accountability on a day which will last so long. Chapter 70 Al Ma'arij, verse 4:

“...during a Day the extent of which is fifty thousand years.”

It is therefore best to lead a simple life in order to minimize one's accountability on the Day of Judgment. It is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, that simplicity is a part of faith. It is a simple life which will cause the poorer Muslims to enter Paradise five hundred years before the rich muslims, as their accounting will be less. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4122. Seeing as people do not generally live for more than 80 years, does it make sense to live an indulgent life if it leads to a delay in entering Paradise by five hundred years? This assuming of course, one enters Paradise directly without being punished in Hell first.

A Muslim must always remember that the more they indulge in lawful worldly things, the more they will face stress in this world, the more it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and the harder their accountability will be on Judgement Day. Whereas, the one who leads a simple life, whereby they obtain and utilise worldly things according to their necessities and responsibilities without waste, excessiveness and extravagance, will obtain peace of mind and body and they will be encouraged to prepare practically for the Day of Judgement, which leads to an easier final accounting. It does not take a scholar to determine which path is best.

The Hereafter - 11

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1372, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed that there is punishment in the grave.

Many verses and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discuss this stage which all people will face in some form or fashion. As it is inevitable, muslims must prepare for it as the light or darkness of the grave does not come from the grave itself. It is one's deeds which either darkens or illuminates their grave. Similarly, it is one's deeds which will determine if they face punishment or mercy in their grave. The only way to prepare for it is through piety which consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. These righteous deeds will protect one from the punishment of the grave, by the permission and mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

It is strange how a Muslim will dedicate much time, energy and wealth to making their worldly home comfortable, even though their stay in this world is short, whereas, they pay little attention to making their grave comfortable, even though one's stay in the grave will be long and more serious.

Muslims often journey to cemeteries in order to bury their relatives and friends. But very few truly realize that one day, sooner or later, their turn will come. Even though, the majority of muslims dedicate the majority of their efforts to pleasing their family and earning wealth over pleasing Allah, the Exalted, through righteous deeds, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, warns that these two things, which muslims give priority to, will abandon them at their grave and only their deeds will remain with them. Therefore, it makes sense for a muslim to give priority to obtaining righteous deeds over pleasing their family and obtaining excess wealth. This does not mean one should abandon their family and wealth. But it means they should fulfil their duty to their family according to the teachings of Islam without going overboard by neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and only obtain the wealth they require to achieve this. When this is done correctly it becomes a righteous deed as well. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. One should never abandon their duties to Allah, the Exalted, for the sake of their family or wealth as this will only lead to an isolated, lonely and dark grave. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 55:

“From it [i.e., the earth] We created you, and into it We will return you, and from it We will extract you another time.”

The Hereafter - 12

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3120, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person will be asked three questions in the grave.

The first question will be who is your Lord? In order to answer this question correctly a muslim must not only believe in Allah, the Exalted, but prove this belief through actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing His decrees with patience. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. It is this very proof which will support a muslim in their grave when they encounter this question. It is important to note, that even some non-muslims believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet they will fail to answer this question correctly as they did not use the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Him, during their lives on Earth. If only believing in Him was enough, then these non-muslims would succeed in this question. But it is quite evident they will not succeed.

The next question will be what is your religion? If a muslim desires to answer this correctly they must not only believe in Islam but practically implement its teachings in their everyday life. This involves sincerely striving to obtain and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is the reason gaining useful knowledge has been made a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. Following Islam goes beyond the few obligatory duties and involves

acting on its teachings in every aspect of one's life, such as one's social, financial, work and personal life.

The final question according to this Hadith will be who is your Prophet? It is important to note, that even some of the past nations believed in their Prophets, peace be upon them, but as they did not follow in their footsteps correctly, they will fail in answering this question correctly. If a muslim desires to answer this question correctly they must not only verbally declare their belief in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but actively learn and act on his traditions and teachings. This is the very purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, meaning, to practically follow them. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

The mercy, love and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which will help a muslim answer this question correctly is only possible to obtain through this method. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.””

To conclude, just like the questions in a written or oral exam cannot be answered successfully without practically learning knowledge, through studying and revision, neither can a person answer the questions of the grave successfully without practically learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in every aspect of one's life.

The Hereafter - 13

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the different difficulties and times of ease people face throughout their lives. There are things which a Muslim can remember in order to maintain their focus on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. One of those things is to remember a fact which is supported by a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7088. It indicates that the person who ends up in Paradise will not be bothered by the difficulties they faced during their life on Earth. And the person who ends up in Hell will not feel better when they are reminded of the luxuries they enjoyed during their life on Earth.

A person should not be fooled into thinking the hereafter is like this world. In this world difficulties bother people even after the difficulties pass. And the moments when a person enjoyed luxuries can make them feel better even if they are in prison. But this is not the case in respect to the hereafter. So a Muslim should remember this fact when they are facing difficulties knowing it will not bother them at all if they end up in Paradise. And sins, vain things and the luxuries of this world will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell.

This attitude is a strong mechanism which encourages a Muslim towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, if they ponder on it often.

The Hereafter - 14

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a person whose company went bankrupt after they faced some difficulties and the regrets they had over this issue. It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

"He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.""

In this world, one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality

muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [what good] to him will be the remembrance?”

The Hereafter - 15

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the biography of a famous person. The things they achieved and the regrets they have.

Muslims should understand that regrets can be classified into two categories. The first are the regrets over worldly things, such as not getting married or having children. The second category are the regrets one will have in their grave and on Judgment Day, such as not making better use of their resources and blessings in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The worldly regrets, irrespective of what they are, will never be permanent, as they will either end when one fulfils their desire, changes their mind or dies. They are temporary in nature, as the maximum time one can have this type of regret is until their death. And they are not so significant, as these regrets may lead to sadness but not severe punishment or torment. In addition, these regrets will end if a person reaches Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

On the other hand, the regrets of the hereafter are long lasting, as the time in the grave and on Judgment Day will be much longer than one's life on this Earth. They will not end until one enters Paradise, which may not happen or it may occur after an extremely long time, as a single day in the hereafter is equivalent to a thousand years on Earth. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 47:

“...And indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of those which you count.”

Finally, these regrets are very significant, as they may well lead to a severe punishment and torment in the hereafter.

Therefore, a muslim should ponder over this and be kind to themselves by striving to remove the potential regrets they will have in the grave and on Judgment Day, before they try to remove the regrets of this world. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verses 23-24:

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life."”

The Hereafter - 16

Many verses and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discuss this stage which all people will face in some form or fashion. As it is inevitable, muslims must prepare for it, as the light or darkness of the grave does not come from the grave itself. It is one's deeds which either darkens or illuminates their grave. Similarly, it is one's deeds which will determine if they face punishment or mercy in their grave. The only way to prepare for it is through obeying Allah, the Exalted, which consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Muslims often journey to cemeteries in order to bury their relatives and friends. But very few truly realize that one day, sooner or later, their turn will come. Even though, the majority of muslims dedicate the majority of their efforts to pleasing their family and earning wealth over pleasing Allah, the Exalted, through righteous deeds, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, warns that these two things which muslims give priority to will abandon them at their grave and only their deeds will remain with them. Therefore, it makes sense for a muslim to give priority to obtaining righteous deeds to pleasing their family and obtaining excess wealth. This does not mean one should abandon their family and wealth. But it means they should fulfil their duty to their family according to the teachings of Islam without going overboard by neglecting their duties to Allah, the

Exalted, and only obtain the worldly things, such as wealth, they require to achieve this. When this is done correctly, it becomes a righteous deed as well. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. One should never abandon their duties to Allah, the Exalted, for the sake of worldly things, such as their family or wealth, as this will only cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This in turn will lead to an isolated, lonely and dark grave.

The Hereafter - 17

The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...”

Whoever responds to this call in this world, will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, will not find peace in it and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long, as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable, it makes sense that one responds to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless, no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

The Hereafter - 18

This point is connected to chapter 80 Abasa, verses 34-37:

“On the Day a man will flee from his brother. And his mother and his father. And his wife and his children. For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him.”

This is when each person will flee from their relatives on Judgment Day out of concern for their own wellbeing. It is important for muslims to understand that Islam does not advise them to abandon their relatives, as upholding the ties of kinship is an extremely important aspect of Islam. But it encourages them to put everyone in their rightful place within their life. This means that they should fulfil the rights of others without going overboard meaning, without compromising on the duties set by Allah, the Exalted, and following the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Unfortunately, some go too far and abandon these more important duties out of misplaced love and loyalty to their relatives. This causes them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. Some even strive to obtain unlawful provision and commit sins for the sake of pleasing their relatives. This great event clearly shows the downside of doing this. A muslim should always support others, especially their relatives, in what is good but never support them in bad things, irrespective of how close their bond with them maybe, as there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

In addition, this great event will occur between the people who, in most cases, share a deeper connection than a person does with their friends. So if this is the outcome of relatives on Judgment Day, can one imagine the outcome of friends? Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 28:

“Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken that one as a friend.”

The only way people can truly benefit each other in this world or in the next is when they prioritise the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, over all else and aid each other in this ultimate goal. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous”

The Hereafter - 19

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he is the first person to intercede and the first person whose intercession will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

A muslim should therefore strive to make themselves worthy of the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by performing the actions which result in this, such as supplicating for it after hearing the call to prayer. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 679. But this would require one to regularly attend the obligatory prayers at a Mosque, instead of offering them at home. The greatest action which will result in the intercession is learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A muslim should not live in heedlessness by rejecting this duty and then expect intercession on Judgment Day, as this is closer to wishful thinking, which is blame worthy and of no real value, compared to true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some muslims who have adopted this wishful thinking expect to obtain Paradise through this intercession even though they do not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These muslims must realise that even though the intercession is a fact, some muslims who will have their punishment reduced through intercession, will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly

unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him.

In addition, the muslim who persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and assumes they will be saved by this intercession must accept the reality that, due to their disobedience and mocking attitude, they may not even leave this world with their faith. Therefore, this Muslim must be more concerned with dying as a Muslim than receiving this intercession on Judgement Day, which is only reserved for Muslims.

The Hereafter - 20

This point is connected to chapter 101 Al Qari'ah, verses 6-9:

“Then as for one whose scales are heavy [with good deeds]. He will be in a pleasant life. But as for one whose scales are light. His refuge will be an abyss.”

It is important for muslims to regularly assess their own deeds, as no one except Allah, the Exalted, is better aware of them than themselves. When one honestly judges their own deeds it will inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins and encourage them towards performing righteous deeds, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. But the one who fails to regularly assess their deeds, will lead a life of heedlessness whereby they misuse the blessings they have been granted. This person will find the weighing of their deeds on the Day of Judgment extremely difficult. In fact, it may well cause them to be hurled into Hell.

A clever business owner will always regularly assess their accounts. This will ensure their business heads in the right direction and ensures they complete all the necessary paperwork correctly, such as a tax return. But the foolish business owner will not regularly take accounts of their business. This will lead to a loss in profits and a failure in correctly

preparing for their accounts. Those who fail to file their accounts correctly with the government face penalties which only makes their lives more difficult. But the key thing to note is that the penalty of failing to correctly assess and prepare one's deeds for the Scales of Judgment Day does not involve a monetary fine. Its penalty is more severe and truly unbearable. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verses 7-8:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”

Finally, a Muslim must not only avoid committing sins but they should also strive to avoid using the blessings they have been granted in vain ways. Vain things may not be sinful but as they are not righteous deeds, they will lead to regrets on Judgement Day, especially when one realises that the vain things they did could have been placed on the good side of the Scales of Judgement Day if they used the blessings correctly. In some cases, a slight difference between the two sides of the Scales may well be the difference between salvation and damnation.

The Hereafter - 21

This point is connected to chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 22:

“And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, "Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves...””

This is when people on Judgment Day will try to blame the Devil for their sins in order to shift their burden of punishment to him. But this verse makes it clear that this is a futile and foolish excuse, as the Devil only inspires people to commit sins, he cannot physically force someone to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Each person makes a choice to obey or disobey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted correctly or incorrectly, and will therefore face the consequences of their choice. Unfortunately, some do not understand this important point. They often commit sins and either blame others by declaring they were convinced to act in this way or they declare that as others are committing sins openly it somehow gives them a license to act in the same way. The same way a judge in a worldly court would never accept these excuses neither will Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. It is important for muslims not to make culture or fashion the standards for their behaviour, as this will misguide them and they will be left with no valid excuses on Judgment Day. Instead, they should adhere to the teachings of Islam which simply outlines how a person must behave in all situations. It is time muslims abandon childish excuses and sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted

in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, before they reach a day when their excuses will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. If Allah, the Exalted, will reject the excuses of those who blame the Devil when he is their open enemy and promised to misguide them, how will Allah, the Exalted, accept any other excuse for disobeying Him?

The Hereafter - 22

There are many Hadiths which discuss the celestial pool, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6579. It advises that it takes a month to cross its entire length, its smell is nicer than perfume, its water is whiter than milk and the one who drinks from it once, will never feel thirsty again. The last point is extremely important, as on Judgment Day people will experience an extreme and unimaginable thirst. For example, the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation which will cause people to sweat excessively. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421.

There is no doubt that every muslim desires to drink from this pool, irrespective of the strength of their faith. But it is important to note, that a muslim should strive to make themselves worthy of drinking from it, instead of simply hoping to achieve this. This is achieved by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, muslims must avoid the disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, especially those actions which prevent one from reaching the celestial pool. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 5996, warns that some muslims who innovated evil things in Islam will be detained and prevented from reaching the celestial pool. Another Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4212, warns that those who support and believe the lies and wrong actions of the unjust rulers will not reach the celestial pool. So it is important for muslims who desire to reach and

drink from the celestial pool to avoid disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, and strive in His sincere obedience.

The Hereafter - 23

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is the path of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world, by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world, so people are left with no excuses.

The Hereafter - 24

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world, they should avoid sins as it is hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true, then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armor and a shield, a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armor and shield of

obeying Allah, the Exalted. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed, so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

The Hereafter - 25

It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid, as only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds, is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true, otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter. If one chooses a path other than his in this world, then how can they possibly end up with him in the next world?

In addition, Islamic teachings make it clear that Paradise will be granted to those who supported their verbal declaration of belief with actions. So one must never be fooled into believing otherwise. The one who fails to practically support their verbal declaration of faith should be more concerned with leaving this world without their faith, as faith is like a plant which must be nourished with actions, otherwise it may well die. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 32:

"The ones whom the angels take in death, [being] good and pure; [the angels] will say, "Peace be upon you. Enter Paradise for what you used to do."

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

The Hereafter - 26

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the main reasons the worship of false deities is common in society is due to the underlying intention of absolving oneself of being held accountable for their actions. The non-Muslims of Mecca, during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, claimed that they worshipped idols in order to draw closer to Allah, the Exalted, as their idols represented different sacred beings, such as Angels, which were close and beloved to Allah, the Exalted. By worshipping them, they incorrectly believed the idols would intercede on their behalf on Judgement Day in the court of Allah, the Exalted, thereby rescuing them from being held accountable for their actions. In their eyes, this was a free ticket to do whatever they pleased as they would not be held accountable for their actions because of this intercession. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 18:

"And they worship other than Allāh that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, "These are our intercessors with Allāh."..."

And chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 3:

"...And those who take protectors besides Him [say], "We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allāh in position." Indeed, Allāh will

judge between them concerning that over which they differ. Indeed, Allāh does not guide he who is a liar...”

Unfortunately, a similar attitude has crept into the minds of some Muslims who adopt a similar belief whereby they attempt to find someone who is considered holy and close to Allah, the Exalted, and strive to please Him through pleasing them, through gifts, presents and in some cases, showing them an unhealthy level of respect and reverence. Their aim is to get these holy people to intercede for them in the court of Allah, the Exalted, in this world and in the hereafter. Even though supplicating for others is lawful and intercession on Judgement Day on behalf of the believers is an established fact, yet this does not mean one is absolved from being held accountable for their actions. Thinking otherwise is only making a mockery out of these realities.

This incorrect belief has driven many Muslims to adopt wishful thinking whereby they believe they can openly and persistently disobey Allah, the Exalted, yet will escape any type of accountability, through the intercession of these holy people. If this was true, the Companions, may Allah be pleased them, had the supplications and aid of the holiest man of all, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they constantly feared their accountability and therefore persisted in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Instead of attempting to find a way out of one's inevitable accountability, they should instead strive to prepare for it by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Otherwise they may well encounter a strict and difficult accountability on a Great Day.

The Hereafter - 27

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the objections given by those who deny the Day of Judgement is that they find it hard to believe Allah, the Exalted, will gather the dust and bones of people, which in most cases have been scattered and mingled with the Earth and other things, such as water, such as those who have their bodies cremated and the remains scattered in an ocean. The fact that Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing indicates that He is fully aware of the location of every particle which makes a human being and He also has the power and control to bring these particles together once again. In order to understand this one should reflect on the different foods they eat and items they buy. These foods and items are made from different parts that are grown and cultivated from different parts of the world. They are brought together to a single location in order to manufacture the item or make the food, which is then delivered to a shop or directly to a customer. If humans have the ability to gather different ingredients and parts from all over the world in order to manufacture an item or make a food dish then why is it surprising that Allah, the Exalted, the All Knowing, All Able, will gather together the particles of a person in order to give them life again, just like He gave them life the first time. No mistakes will occur with this process as Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of everyone's unique features, such as their DNA and fingerprints. Chapter 75 Al Qiyamah, verses 3-4:

"Does man think that We will not assemble his bones? Yes. [We are] Able [even] to proportion his fingertips."

The Hereafter - 28

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. A common attitude which is often found amongst non-Muslims has become apparent in Muslims also. Those who do not believe in the Day of Judgement often claim that even if it was real, they would make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that Day. Unfortunately, this attitude has also affected many Muslims who turn away from practically preparing for the Day of Judgement, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and simply claim that they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. The issue with believing that this attitude will lead to success on Judgement Day is that one adopts an incredibly disrespectful and rude belief about Allah, the Exalted. They begin to believe that Allah, the Exalted, will treat the one who ignored Him and followed their desires equally to the doer of good, the one who used the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. If a worldly judge behaved in this manner they would be highly criticised and even dismissed from their post, as it completely contradicts justice. As Allah, the Exalted, is the All Just, how can a Muslim believe and attribute such a negative attitude to Him? Allah, the Exalted, extending His infinite mercy to the creation is one thing but allowing those who persisted in disobedience and harming others to escape the consequences of their actions is simply unjust, something Allah, the Exalted, would not do.

In addition, if Allah, the Exalted, was going to forgive everyone, irrespective of the deeds they committed, then it makes life in this world pointless, as the purpose of this world is to differentiate between those who did good and those who did not. Creating pointless things directly challenges the

infinite Dignity, Majesty and Wisdom of Allah, the Exalted. How can someone who believes in Him then attribute such a silly thing to Him?

To conclude, a Muslim must never be fooled by the false belief that they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. The place of actions is this world, whereas Judgement Day is only the place of consequences. Therefore, one must prepare for these consequences by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 57:

"So that Day, their excuse will not benefit those who wronged, nor will they be asked to appease [Allāh]."

And chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 21:

"Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge [i.e., assume]."

The Hereafter - 29

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. There are many factors which prevent a Muslim from practically preparing for the Day of Judgement, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but only one of the more subtle factors will be discussed.

In the vast majority of cases in this world a person who fails a particular task or activity is given a second chance. In some cases, the second chance is direct, such as retaking a failed driving test, and in other cases the second chance is indirect, such as a divorcee getting married to someone else. The concept of second chances also applies in religious matters. For example, everyone experiences the sister of death: sleep, and most of these people are given another chance to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, when life is restored to them when they wake up. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 42:

"Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

This concept of second chances often becomes so engraved in the mind of a Muslim that subconsciously they begin to behave as if they will be given a second chance on Judgment Day, if they fail to adequately prepare for it. This is a subtle delusion and trick of the Devil which a Muslim must be careful to avoid. It is so subtle that one can behave practically in this manner without realising it, simply because they are under the assumption that just like they always had second chances in this world, they will somehow be given it on the Day of Judgement also.

The best way to combat this subtle delusion is to strengthen one's faith. This is only achieved through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that one remains steadfast on practically preparing for the Day of Judgement at all times, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 33:

"...Indeed, the promise of Allāh is truth, so let not the worldly life delude you and be not deceived about Allāh by the Deceiver [i.e., Satan]."

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

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